LETTER TO A NOVELIST, 1960, BY NORMAN COUSINS

The Saturday Review of Literature

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By Pearl S. Buck
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"THE U. S. COLLEGE GRADUATE"
By F. Lawrence Babcock
Reviewed by Ordway Tead

PEARL BUCK: Is her novel "Dragon Seed" an "either-or" book? *(See page 5)*

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The Saturday Review of Literature

Letter to a Novelist, 1960

NORMAN COUSINS

SO you're going to write a novel about the Second World War. Good. But just in case you intend that novel to be a raw and bitter jeremiad, with your hero a young and cynical "thinker" who is convinced right down to his last brain cell that the issues of that war were phoney, that the American people were hoodwinked into playing the game of mass murder, and that the way to fight war is to say we won't fight; just in case you intend that the moral of your novel will be that war can never happen to you and your generation because you know all the answers and because you're too smart to be taken in by the propaganda of filthy interests—well, just in case that happens to be the burning message you want to tell the world, and on the chance that you might like to know what we poor fools were thinking about while we allowed ourselves to be sucked into a niagara of barbarism, if I may anticipate one of your pet phrases, here are a few notes set down in the thick of it all.

True, you may claim that the very fact that this is written while the guns are still smoking may serve as an automatic disqualifier, but you will also admit that we alone can speak for ourselves concerning our own part in this living hell; only we can say how events appear to us before they pile up into that endless mountain of the past that few succeeding generations may view alike, although each one is certain to flaunt the impressive word "perspective" to justify its determined belief that never before its own time was such a true view of history possible. Make no mistake about it: this letter represents no presumptuous attempt to say that it is impossible for you, or those who come after you, to write about us fairly and objectively; its main purpose is to commend to you a few notions or ideas which seem to be in the air at this time and which you may find of some use. . . .

First of all, let's get this "cynicism" business straight. Before you imprison your young hero in print in any elaborate display of disillusion, it might be well to glance at our own experience. We, too, following a war, cultivated what we thought at the time to be a healthy cynicism. What we didn't realize was that there is a thin line dividing cynicism from smugness—a very thin line—and it turned out that we were just being overly smart, too obsessed for our own good of the idea that our supposedly superior intelligence was all the insurance we needed to keep us out of any new war.

We could afford to be cynical because we were the victors in that last war, and we mouthed a lot of pseudo-intellectual mumbo-jumbo about it not making any difference whether that previous war were won or lost. But the fact remains that it made all the difference in the world, as any citizen of Germany could have told us then and as we later were to find out for ourselves.

Better be careful of that cynicism. It played a large part not only in making a new and greater war possible but in creating psychological and even material barriers toward recognizing a very real and tangible danger to the life of America—even as that danger swept down upon us with the speed and force of a prairie fire. It became, in large part, a substitute for intelligent action and helped to create and nourish the most tragic *idée fixe* in American history—that peace was divisible, and that America, like a cemetery, was a self-contained unit that could remain intact regardless of hell, high water, and Hitler. Along with this went the notion that we could solve the giant problem of war simply by passing a law against it—which we did, helping to inflate the illusion of isolation by calling it the Neutrality Act.

—Drawing by Arthur Szyk, from "The New Order."

This isolation would have been wonderful, except that we were the only ones who believed in it. Germany, Italy, and Japan didn't believe in it, neither for themselves or for us. Cynical, were we? Balderdash! We were just coasting on our ignorance, only we didn't realize it until the damned shooting match came banging down around our ears.

BLAME us as much as you want to in your novel. But don't say we were tricked or propagandized into it. Mister, it would be impossible to imagine a people more over-conscious and over-cautious of the word "propaganda" than Americans of the last decade. For years they had been subjected to such a barrage of exposés of propaganda that almost every kindergarten child seemed to be on guard against it. It became the bogeyman of our generation. Even many of our important newspapers fell victim to this overwhelming, paralyzing fear, and would run warnings and disclaimers on their front pages. So far did we lean backwards to avoid any taint that we almost refused to believe our own senses. The entire nation seemed to declare a moratorium on mental operations out of fear that it might fall victim to someone's propaganda. The only trouble with it was that propaganda against propaganda was largely behind it all.

If we were guilty of anything at all, it was a shortage of critical thinking. But drop "interventionist propaganda" out of your bill of particulars. A more serious and truer indictment would be that in great part we brought the calamity upon ourselves. And when I say "we," I mean not only America but the other democratic states as well.

The family of nations had an opportunity after 1918 to arrange its life on an orderly and constructive basis, but the chance was abused and virtually

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discarded. Time and again, intelligent leadership could have saved the world from the blood bath that immersed humanity even before it had time to count its losses from the last one, but intelligence and leadership seemed to represent the essence of mutual contradiction. It was more than the mere lack of foresight by which disaster might be averted; it seemed almost as though disaster were being openly courted.

You can say in your book that for a time the democracies seemed as though they were the misfits of the twentieth century. They bungled the peace, and for a long time they seemed to be bungling the war. They made a profession of nothing, neither peace nor war, but they were challenged at war by nations whose profession was war. You might almost ask: if the democracies could neither maintain peace nor wage war, of what earthly use were they in this very pragmatic world?

Frankly, we had good cause for a time to wonder about that, too. Many of the democracies were not only unprepared for the danger which just stared them in the face and then rushed right up to them, but, when they finally did wake up, backed into the contest by fighting a war which had become obsolete almost a generation before. And it was not until the eleventh hour that they seemed able to justify their existence in terms of the imperatives of the day.

But what about the first ten hours? you may ask. Why did the price of saving their own lives have to soar so high before the democracies decided to do some hard thinking and hard hitting? And why did each one await its own turn at the chopping block when, if they had all acted together, they might have been able to overturn both the chopping block and the executioner? When you ask questions such as these you are getting down to cases.

In 1937, Germany would have had to face some fifty millions of soldiers if she had decided to fight simultaneously the same nations she was later to fight or conquer, or attempt to conquer, separately. The Reichswehr was strong, but not so strong that it could take on, even excluding America, the combined mass strengths of England, France, Russia, Austria, Czecho-Slovakia, Poland, Greece, Yugoslavia, Holland, Norway, Belgium, Denmark, and a few others. But Germany had no fear of collective opposition. Each nation was so blinded by its petty interests, so convinced that it alone held some special dispensation against disaster, so divided within itself, that Germany was enabled to pick her own good time and place and circumstance for the attempted destruction of almost every one. Moreover, many nations for a long time preferred to see in Adolf Hitler a magnificent monster who could be nourished along and bargained into serving their interests or prejudices.

Yes; if you have a restless hammer, bang it down on the mistakes which not only made Hitler possible, but made him powerful. And you are well within your rights if you ask how we could have had any faith in the future of democracies when they had proved themselves so slow-moving and blind in the past. You might also ask what led us to expect that there could ever be any basis for a revitalized league of nations or a world organized under democratic auspices when history had proved the democracies so selfish and narrow in outlook. Did we think, you may ask, that the four freedoms at the heart of democracy, here and elsewhere, could survive such basic weaknesses? Were we fighting to win a war in order to be able to lose the peace?

WELL, we would have been pretty stupid if we hadn't tried to think about those questions and at least make a stab at answering them. In fact, we ourselves asked a great many more questions—questions about democracy's internal record in America, about mistakes and weaknesses which have set up important debits on the balance sheet of the nation constituting real and pressing dangers to the life of a free people.

Those debits tell a story of abuse—abuse of the land, of democratic institutions, even of the people themselves. Only the seemingly inexhaustible richness of the ground we stand on prevented America from becoming a wasteland, but no land in all history has seen so much neglect, so much reckless exploitation. As for free institutions, time and again they have been allowed to fall into jeopardy as the forms of democracy degenerated into corrupt politics—almost automatic by-products of an indifferent people. Indifference or unconcern or apathy—whatever you may call it—not only toward local and national politics, but also toward the long-range national welfare—these have been the dead weights for long periods of time on the hopes for a vital, dynamic democracy.

Nor must we overlook the incredible selfishness of various groups which have sought to extract from the national community all the privileges and special dispensations they can get, regardless of the cost or the effect upon the country as a whole. And add to the final summing-up the recurrent economic dislocations, carrying with

(*Continued on page* 16)

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Japanese Gentility

DRAGON SEED. By Pearl S. Buck. New York: The John Day Company. 1941. 378 *pp.* $2.50.

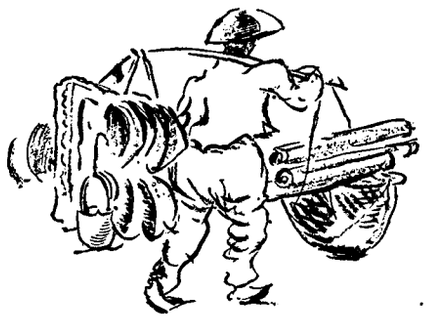
Reviewed by HOWARD MUMFORD JONES

NO reader of the newest Pearl Buck novel can read it without being filled with detestation for the Japanese. The bombing of unprotected Chinese cities, the acts of sexual savagery and sexual perversity, the amoral and scientifically organized looting of Chinese food supplies, the devilish devices for breaking Chinese spirit, like the hawking of opium, the flooding of occupied territory with prostitutes, the military murders, the artificial price systems, and the hiring of more pliable Chinese to carry out the wishes of the conquerors—all these elements are categorically given. Miss Buck is regarded by American readers as an authority on China, and since this is what we wish to believe of our enemies, "Dragon Seed" is likely to have a wide sale.

Does the novel exist as a work of art? Is it a serious work of art either in the sense of "The Good Earth," which is not a propagandistic novel, or in the sense of "For Whom the Bell Tolls," which is clearly a propaganda novel? There can be no question of the sincerity of Miss Buck's interest in the Chinese or of her honest indignation against the Japanese. Upon reflection, however, doubts concerning the success of "Dragon Seed" as fiction will not down.

One difficulty is that it is an either-or book. The Chinese are virtuously white and the Japanese are viciously black. Indeed, throughout the novel we never see an individual Japanese. Their villainy is a generalized viciousness, their psychology is given a mere token representation in the persons of a few private soldiers. The closest acknowledgment by the author of the existence of family life among the Nipponese is the finding of a picture of a woman and some children on the body of a Japanese soldier whom one of the Chinese characters has indifferently killed. Inasmuch as Miss Buck refuses the real problem of the situation (namely, why is it that certain human beings commit atrocious acts?), it is easy for her to attribute an abstract and inhuman perversity to the wicked conquerors.

On the other hand the "family formula" which did such excellent duty in "The Good Earth" trilogy is trotted out again and does yeoman service in the book. The family is that of Ling Tan, a farmer who lives outside the walls of Nanking. Indifferent to political events and attached to the good earth, this family is almost wrecked by Japanese deviltry, survives, adds to its strength and its numbers, and is converted into a group of patriots carrying on covert warfare against the conquerors. A wholly admirable woman or two, admirable and, I fear, quite unbelievable in fictional terms, represent "Young China." They marry into the family and establish it thereafter in the true patriotic faith. Even a fat merchant, who sells out to the Japanese, proves to have a heart of gold at the end, and such Chinese villainy as appears is pictured as weakness rather than evil.



—Drawing by Carl Crow, from "Foreign Devils in the Flowery Kingdom" (Harpers).

The tale is told in that mannered style which Miss Buck thinks essential to a story of China. It is a style faintly Biblical and consciously "simple." It faintly suggests also the style of the Morris-Magnusson saga translations, and it has the virtues of a certain directness, a certain earthiness. It permits Miss Buck to mention menstruation without offence and to produce a sort of ageless charm. But it is also a style with defects so quintessential as to spoil the story. One defect is monotony and the other is remoteness. In spite of the horror and suffering, nothing is immediate because everything is strained through the mannerism. The village life is as remote and idyllic as that of "Hermann und Dorothea" or "Evangeline," a village life from which the coarseness, the smells, the monotony, the narrowness, the evil have been mostly removed. When the Japanese come, the idyll is temporarily eclipsed, but an impossibly romantic union between a young and modern Chinese girl and an "embittered" son of the family presently restores us to the high pitch of sentiment and patriotism.

To my way of thinking "Dragon Seed" is likely to be a popular success and an artistic failure. It cannot be ranked as the bland dust jacket announces, "with the author's finest work." It is the author's finest work reduced to a formula and watered down, and despite moments of real emotion it remains an adventure story with patriotic overtones. Unfortunately for the tale, the adventures do not mount to any climax, but are simply strung along, one after the other, on the simple theme of an increase in Chinese patriotism.

"Dragon Seed" is to be published on January 22 and will not be on sale in the bookshops until that date. It is reviewed here with the consent of the publishers.

More of the Same

THE END IS NOT YET: CHINA AT WAR. Herrymon Maurer. New York: Robert M. McBride & Co. 1941. 321 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by T. A. BISSON

THE story of the China war has been told many times, but not often with the insight that Herrymon Maurer brings to the task. He paints what is largely an impressionistic picture, sketched with bold strokes and a flowing style, but always ribbed with fact. The wealth of detail on social and political issues in the back country, particularly Szechwan province, is obviously the result of painstaking first-hand observation. He deftly interweaves local politics in Szechwan or Yunnan with national politics, showing their close inter-relationships. He notes the practical difficulties which have confronted Chiang Kai-shek's stubborn effort to unify and centralize the national administration, as well as the practical compromises which have proved necessary along the way. He presents a discriminating analysis of the Kuomintang-Communist problem. For the student of Chinese politics these are the highlights which cannot afford to be missed.

It would be wrong to infer, however, that this is a technical study. It is above all an admirable introduction to China for the layman, bringing to the surface the swift, and often deep-lying, currents of Chinese life in wartime. There is a rich flavor of reality in the vignettes of the Chinese schoolroom and student, of landlords and politicians, of farmers and coolies, of Loh Chung-hwa's family in Chengtu, and of other aspects of life in the towns and countryside of inland China. The more usual subjects—air raids in Chungking, the refugees' trek west, the guerrillas, China's economic lifelines—round out the narrative.

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Nabokov . . .

THE REAL LIFE OF SEBASTIAN KNIGHT. By Vladimir Nabokov. Norfolk, Conn.: New Directions. 1941. 205 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by BESS JONES

THIS fictional biography of a fictional novelist by a fictional Boswell would have seemed more sensational to the sophisticates of fifteen years ago, deep in the obscure witticisms of Carl Van Vechten and the sparkling paradoxes of James Branch Cabell, than it now seems to those who survived that period intact. Towards the close of the book someone in it is asked whether he had read the works of Sebastian Knight. One or two, he replied, getting the titles wrong, but "the author seemed to him a terrible snob, intellectually . . . Knight seemed to him to be constantly playing some game of his own invention, without telling his partners its rules."

In this, as in other, more scintillating passages, Mr. Nabokov has made the best possible commentary on his own work, anticipating slyly wherever he can any criticism even the most interested reader can make of him. It is all a part of his private little game, amusing enough for a while, but restricted in its appeal. The subject is a deceased novelist, half-Russian, half-English, half-brother of the narrator. He is a genius, as his five books (including "The Doubtful Asphodel" and "The Prismatic Asphodel") prove, but far too subtle and perceptive for the average reader, who wants only banalities. The method is a kind of literary chase, or, in Sebastian Knight's own term, the pursuit of a "research theme," to develop which details not immediately significant in themselves are tracked down with relentless minuteness. That the thinness of the findings hardly justifies the intensity of the hunt is of no importance. It is part of Mr. Nabokov's joke.

In the course of the narrator's attempt to retrace the hazy pattern of Sebastian Knight's life, he gives us some wonderfully exciting literary analysis, penetrating if precious observations on writing and popular taste, digs at literary cults, and occasionally a nice little human touch. And finally, lest you miss the point of what he has done, he offers the key to the enjoyment of "The Real Life of Sebastian Knight." "The Prismatic Bezel," Mr. Knight's half-brother suggests, can be greatly liked if it is once understood that the heroes of the book are "what might loosely be called 'methods of composition'."

Vladimir Nabokov

Miguel Angel Menendez

Wylie . . .

STRANGERS ARE COMING. By I. A. R. Wylie. New York: Random House. 1941. 312 *pp.* $2.50.

Viewed quite simply, this is a nice little light romance. It is about the strange conjunction of two utterly different worlds, and how love, that one eternal constant, doth make the lion and the lamb to lie down together in harmony, not to mention Warsaw, Poland, and Troytown, New England. The boy called Johnny-David Fenwick, who runs between, is our familiar American college juvenile, fearless and heedless, who brings a troop of Polish vaudevillians, fleeing from Europe, back to his home town. The difficulties and developments that arise may well be imagined, but all are settled in good romantic style, while you know what conquers all. If this note seems not quite happy about the whole thing, it is because there is a fundamental disharmony here that jars. After all, being bombed out of Warsaw and thrust into exile, is still too close to raw living to be as charming and romantic as Miss Wylie makes it.

Menendez . . .

NAYAR. By Miguel Angel Menendez. Translated from the Spanish by Angel Flores. New York: Farrar & Rinehart. 1942. 277 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by RICHARD R. PLANT

FLIGHT through the impenetrable Mexican jungle, days of hiding in groves and swamps, friendly Indians and hostile natives, consuming heat and violent rains, death and retribution: thus runs the story of Ramon Cordoba. He is a half breed, a mixture of Indian cruelty and wisdom, and the deliberation and shrewdness of the White Race. The Indian blood is stronger in him: he never makes plans, he drifts along, following his impulses. The creatures of the jungle are nearer to him then men. He has no clear conception of the world, only emotions, love and hatred, sudden fits of depression and moments of hilarity.

The novel, a leading entry in the Latin American Prize Novel Contest, conveys this world of the primitive perfectly. In fact, it is so much a story of Ramon that some of his aimlessness infects it, blurring the sequences of the narrative and making it appear as if witnessed through fog. The reader's conception of the why and how of things is not much clearer than Ramon's, and thus we are forever at a loss to see through the jungle that is his world. Sometimes there is an isolated chapter, describing the trials, rites, and feasts of the Indians, which makes a fascinating bit of folklore. But the whole story comes out of the nowhere, ambles on for a space, and finally loses itself. There is a procession of weird characters: sorcerers, syndics, half-wits, adolescent girls in pregnancy, hermaphrodites, adulterers. The narrator is Enrique, a small government employee, whose office building is set afire by his friend Ramon, which strangely enough, seems to please him.

The language of "Nayar" is exquisite. We understand that Miguel Menendez is primarily a poet. His similes are lyrical and striking. It should be emphasized that the translation by Angel Flores is beautifully written. Many foreign words are left in the English text, a technique which guarantees an authentic flavor but puts obstacles in the reader's way. It may be, however, that there was no way of conveying their meaning to an American reader—another proof that we have much to learn before we can understand our Latin American neighbors and an obstacle which translators would do well to bestow pains to overcome.

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Poets of the Months

WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT

IN Norfolk, Connecticut, the publishing house known as "New Directions" instituted, about a year ago, a series of poetry pamphlets, issued monthly to subscribers at a charge of four dollars a year. Each number, which presents a "Poet of the Month," was printed by a different fine press. Single copies have sold, paper-covered, for thirty-five cents, in boards for a dollar. So far, over a dozen pamphlets have been printed under the direction of James Laughlin, and now the 1942 series has begun with a selection of some poems by Robert Herrick—for the series is not confined to newcomers.

The presses involved, so far, have included the Merrymount Press of Boston, The Harbor Press of New York, The Prairie Press of Iowa, and the Ward Ritchie Press of California, to give some idea of the range. The merit of the work included is, naturally, uneven; but the very new poets have been presented with justification.

Among the poets, mostly American, William Carlos Williams and Malcolm Cowley may be called veterans. Their work has already been appraised by American critics. Williams is the far longer established, dating from the early days of Alfred Kreymborg's "Others" and the inception of Harriet Monroe's *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse*. By some today he is regarded as one of our finest American writers. He is caviar to the general and an outstanding independent. Malcolm Cowley reviews for the *New Republic* in his function of literary editor, and appraises much of the latest poetry. His own verse seems to be somewhat of a sideline; but he has done enough to evince a marked talent, eclectic, still tinged by a lost bohemian existence, but also, at times, as American as a woodchuck. His most moving poem to date is "the last international" in his third section of "The Dry Season," called "The City in the Sea." This is a phantasmagoric parade of ghosts. If it had been written by Rimbaud it would still be in process of rediscovery.

—*Drawing by Naar.*
Rainer Maria Rilke

Cowley, however, closed the year's dozen of the New Directions poets. Williams had opened that year, then had come Donne, and the third choice was Harry Brown, who has just given us so fine an American narrative in "The Poem of Bunker Hill." "The End of a Decade," so far as I know, was his first book, and conveyed indubitable promise. If Brown outgrows certain mannerisms inevitable in a young man subjected to all the chi-chi that seems inextricable from "modernist" poetry, he may very likely develop into one of the best American writers of our time. He has already shown that there is power in his elbow.

Howard Baker's "A Letter from the Country" that followed (his "The Ode to the Sea" having been praised by Robert Penn Warren) was selected from work of the past ten years. It is averagely cryptic, as modernist verse goes; though the opening poem, which sees a man about a dog, is clear enough. And there is neat, biting irony in such verse (about bombed Madrid) as "Violation of Logic." That ode to the sea has fine moments, and the letter from the country at least a terse and memorable fabular ending. Mr. Baker's forms are traditional, his speech is, in the main, remotely classical.

Theodore Spencer, our next number in the series, with "The Paradox in the Circle," I have found the most brilliant and original of the lot of poets, though within a strictly limited domain. He writes poems to be read aloud, and puts them on phonograph records. He uses the refrain as it has not been used since the days of the pre-Raphaelites. This poet is a wizard and a warlock. Proof?

> Prester John had apes of gold
> To talk away the almond hours;
> King Alexander, we are told,
> Had sudden birds in golden flowers
> To bubble out music all day long,
> And ravish his dark heart with song.

"The Shell" is a marvelous little poem, and "A Narrative" as De la Mareishly amusing a string of rhymes as one could meet of a summer's day. For sheer pleasure I can heartily recommend Mr. Spencer's book. There is wisdom too.

—*Drawing by Schreiber.*
Malcolm Cowley

The late John Wheelwright, whose selected poems are introduced by the critic R. P. Blackmur, possessed an odd and peculiar gift, and his poem on Amy Lowell, persisting after death in "Dinner Call," is a favorite of mine. He is for the highly literate and the Brahminical. Josephine Miles presents an enchanted artichoke in "Poems on Several Occasions." Delmore Schwartz's much-praised dramatic narrative, "Shenandoah," I have found quite remarkably inept, in that I feel Arthur Kober could have done the prose much better, and that the spirit of Shenandoah speaks in very bad blank verse. It is so ambitious an attempt, that it seems at times positively embarrassing. Dudley Fitts, whose "More Poems from the Palatine Anthology" followed Mr. Schwartz's poem in sequence, has already given us a collection like this. His translations are lively—"Rumoresque Senum Severiorum" from Marcus Argentarius is vividly amusing. There are other diversions here, and a few brevities.

F. T. Prince is a young English poet, originally introduced by T. S. Eliot. His longer poems seem to me very much like "double talk." I am always upon the verge of knowing what they mean, and yet, for all their intense literacy and erudite suavity, they make Jabberwocky seem plain. On the other hand, some of the shorter poems are simple and moving. The general tone of this pamphlet is sensitive and melancholy, somewhat hermaphroditic. A fine ear for the music of language. The series closed with some poems from "Das Stundenbuch" by Rainer Maria Rilke, translated by Babette Deutsch. Translations from the German always seem to me singularly unmemorable. And they do not sound at all like the German language.

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Issues and Problems of Today

THIS AGE OF FABLE. By Gustav Stolper. New York: Reynal & Hitchcock. 1941. 369 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by GUENTER REIMANN

DR. STOLPER has written a book dealing with almost all issues and pertinent economic and social problems of our world today. He writes on capitalism and socialism, on competition and planning, on democracy and totalitarianism, on inflation and deflation, on Great Britain, Germany, Japan, Russia, and last but not least, also on the United States. His book is stimulating. Dr. Stolper writes in a fluent, journalistic style even on complicated problems—often too journalistic—for which Dr. Stolper apologizes in his introduction: "This book does not pretend to open new vistas of scientific knowledge. Most of what it tells has been told by others, and I am sure in a better and more profound way."

Dr. Stolper tries to destroy the "fables" created by the defenders or apologists of totalitarianism as well as by all those who "propose to reduce the complexities of our time to simple, plausible formulas." In the first part of his book he deals with the various arguments which have been popularized with the assumption that capitalism no longer works. His chapter on "Capitalist Automatism" is written in the style of Adam Smith. Describing the complex gold problem, the author explains that "the tie between the gold price and commodity prices is completely cut," but he also believes that the international gold standard will be reintroduced in case of an Allied victory, while an—improbable—Nazi victory would compel the United States to give up buying foreign gold. In his chapters on "Production For Profit vs. Production For Use," and "Poverty amidst Plenty," the author asserts that Government interference and State "planning" have created more economic evils than the competitive economy, and that the latter would have achieved better results if left alone.

In the second part of his book Dr. Stolper takes up the "fable" of "Lebensraum" for the "have-not nations," and makes a special point that bankers as well as big industrialists were taking part in foreign ventures which were part of the imperialist program "only under pressure of their Government." He defends the British system against the "fable" of degeneracy. The Russian system was able to build up a powerful military machine, but it cannot effectively work in peace time. In his final chapter, the author makes a passionate appeal for the resumption of "a new faith" reviving old ideals.

This short survey is inadequate. Many problems are posed and disputed which cannot be described here. The reviewer does not feel satisfied with some of the answers the author gives, and even feels that not only did he not destroy many of the old fables, but created a number of new ones. This was perhaps to a certain extent inevitable, because Dr. Stolper defends principles that cannot be tested.

Sometimes Dr. Stolper simplifies his arguments too much. Thus he writes that every producer who wants to make a profit must produce something that is "useful." Therefore, capitalism is production for use, and insofar fulfills the ideal of the socialists. But it is not enough that this product can be "used" or consumed; it also must be exchangeable or saleable. This dual character—production for use and for exchange—disappears in the author's argument.

Dr. Stolper seems to believe that "the political environment" (Washington-New Deal?) was responsible for the reluctance of capitalists to make new investments and therefore the Government must be made responsible for the absence of a new investment boom. Of course, it will never be possible to find out what would have happened if the Government had not interfered.

Gustav Stolper

"This Age of Fable" is a provocative, partisan work, in defense of the views of "liberal conservatives" who are against Governmental interference in economic life, and who believe that this war must be won for ideals "fitting the great world power to which all mankind looks for leadership and salvation."

Tiny Refugee

JOURNEY FOR MARGARET. By W. L. White. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co. 1941. 256 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by NYM WALES

THIS is one of a plethora of Britain-takes-it books, yet it is a charming and unusual human-interest story, centering around the actual adoption of a war orphan. W. L. White, the journalist from Kansas, whose first book was "What People Said," sailed to England on one of the fifty United States destroyers transferred to the British Navy. In addition to reporting the war, his wife had given him a personal commission to adopt a refugee child. He decided upon Margaret, three and a half years old, with big black eyes that looked at life "with piteous intensity." All during his stay in bomb-torn London, White visited the little girl at the Anna Freud rest home, and became fascinated with her not only in an individual way but as a study in wartime child psychology. With his charge now safe in New York, the author writes: "No longer do we have to make the blackout in Margaret's room, closing every curtain tightly before she will go to sleep, as we did the first month. And she understands that nothing ever drops out of the shiny transport planes that glitter overhead, hardly looks up from her play as they buzz over Central Park on their way to La Guardia field."

The book is humorous in its crisp journalese style, and not too heavy on the sentimental side. It is also an exciting diary of adventure and incident, including a mine-sweeping experience in the English Channel. Of the bombing, he remarks that the Nazi victims were "only 1,500 a week, which is a negligible rise in the death rate for a city of 6,000,000. You are infinitely safer, living in London, than you would be if you were a Negro infant living in rural Mississippi." White is very American in his reactions, and it is interesting that he should record: "Never in any country have I seen the various social orders mixing with so warm an enthusiasm. When Joe Kennedy says democracy is dead in Great Britain, I can't for the life of me think what he means."

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More Dimensions for Lincoln

LINCOLN: HIS LIFE IN PHOTOGRAPHS. By Stephan Lorant. New York: Duell, Sloane & Pierce. 1942. 159 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by PHILIP VAN DOREN STERN

SO far as our understanding of history is concerned one thing sharply divides our modern age from all past eras. The invention of photography in 1839 marks a tremendously important turning point in the objective recording of historical data. No drawn or painted portrait can be trusted to give a faithful rendering of a man's appearance; no sketch can convey scenic reality one half so well as the camera's impartial eye fixes it upon a light-sensitive screen. The American Civil War seems close and real to us because we know exactly how its soldiers looked; we can study the details of their uniforms, observe sympathetically how they behaved in front of a camera, and even gaze upon them as they lay dead upon the battlefield. The face of the war's great leader is as familiar to us as that of our closest friend. Because of photography we know Abraham Lincoln as a man rather than as a historical portrait hanging forbiddingly on gallery walls. In the series of photographs made of him during the four years of war we are even able to trace minutely the changes that age and worry made on his features.

The photographic iconography of Lincoln has been pursued as assiduously as the study of the details of his personal life. One by one the various portraits have been traced down, dated, and catalogued. The chief merit of Stephan Lorant's book is that he makes the entire series of known Lincoln photographs available to the public at a popular price. In the useful appendix we can behold the living record of Abraham Lincoln from 1846 to within a few days of the end of his life.

The book contains, too, pictures of the houses and buildings associated with Lincoln, portraits of the members of his family, his friends, his generals, and his political allies and adversaries. There is reason to be grateful that they have been reproduced by clear halftones and letterpress.

But beyond assembling these pictures in Sunday supplement style, Mr. Lorant has contributed nothing to make them into a book. The photographs have their own appeal because of their historical importance and intrinsic interest, but they develop no theme, tell no significant story, and give only the cheerfully artless effect of an old family album which is always fun to look at but which reveals very little about the people frozen in in its pages. The captions are written in a bald, journalistic style resembling that of our popular picture magazines. They convey nothing of the emotional drama implicit in Lincoln's life, nor does the brief and naively written text give more than a skeleton outline of the chief facts of the Civil War President's career.

As a reference catalogue of Lincoln photographs the book has its usefulness, but it possesses no literary or biographical value, for it is completely lacking in any attempt at interpretation or even of any understanding of the man who was one of the most complex of all Americans. Like the picture magazines one picks up in the barber shop it catches the eye and holds its interest momentarily, but the interest comes from what the photographers have captured rather than from anything the editor has done to integrate or supplement their pictorial records.

Stephan Lorant at his desk, with Lincoln photographs on the wall behind him.

Virtuous Hanoverian

KING GEORGE V: A PERSONAL MEMOIR. By John Gore. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1941. 464 *pp., with index.* $5.

Reviewed by CRANE BRINTON

THE House of Hanover—now the House of Windsor—has never been remarkable for the intellectual brilliance of its members. If such a shocking bit of *lèse-majesté* as submitting a royal personage to an intelligence test can be imagined, it seems likely that the I. Q. of almost anyone of the English Hanoverians would have been rather low. No doubt many of them possessed other traits more useful, at least for an English king, than bookish cleverness.

Mr. John Gore's life of King George V is an official memoir of one of the most characteristic rulers among the stable, kindly, virtuous Hanoverians. It follows the late king through a long, active life from his early days in the Navy through his twenty-six years of ceremonial kingship. It would take a Lytton Strachey to make an obviously interesting book of such a life, but for those who like the honest and complete record of a sensible and sober life Mr. Gore's book can be recommended.

The family life of the Hanoverians has, in a queerly alternating pattern of sovereigns, been exemplary. The alternate generations were not so virtuous in domestic relations, but George the Fifth, like George the Third, was a good son, husband, and father. In family letters he referred to Edward VII as "Dear Papa" right to the end of his life, and to his mother, Queen Alexandra, as "Mother-dear."

Mr. Gore gives, in a very interesting appendix, a full list of the books King George recorded himself as reading. His Majesty was a singularly methodical person, as witness his well-known hobby of stamp-collecting, and apparently kept a complete record of all the books he read since May 1890. The concluding portion, which Mr. Gore gives in full, is for the most part the sort of sturdy list one might expect, heavily weighted with good, solid, tweedy English histories and travels. But in 1932 His Majesty is recorded as having read "Lady Chatterley's Lover."

SOLUTION OF LAST WEEK'S DOUBLE-CROSTIC (No. 407)

M. PRIOR:

THE LADY'S LOOKING-GLASS

When the big lip and watery eye
Tell me the rising storm is nigh,
'Tis then thou art the angry main,
Deformed by winds and dashed by rain;
. . . The poor sailor that must try
Its fury, labors less than I.
Shipwrecked, in vain to land I make.

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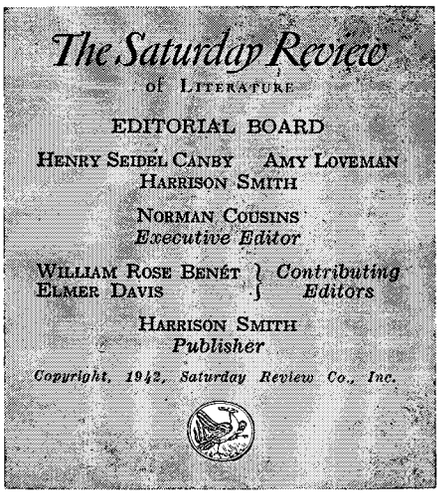

THE TWAIN MEET

On the Road to Mandalay
Where the flying fishes play
And the dawn comes up like thunder
Over China 'cross the Bay

THE war has suddenly plunged the American newspaper and magazine reader into a complete maze of Pacific islands and ports, from Dutch Harbor in Alaska, where a great American naval and air base is being created, to Hawaii, center of American Pacific power, to Samoa in the South Pacific which has just had its first attack, to the vast Philippine Archipelago in the Western Pacific, to the Empire of the Dutch East Indies, Borneo, New Guinea, and finally to the heart of white power in the Orient, the Malay Peninsula and Singapore.

The elder generation, brought up on Kipling and Conrad, imbibes with its breakfast coffee the names that once spelt for it romance and exotic glamour. Rangoon and Mandalay, Maulmein, Malaya—these opened up an enchanted world to readers of the 1900's. There was a time when any college educated youth could quote line or incident that had these places for their setting.

Today it is said that Kipling is no longer read by our youth; that Joseph Conrad's "Victory," "Youth," "Lord Jim," "The Rescue," "Typhoon," to mention the first of his novels that come to mind, languish on library shelves, that "White Shadows of the South Seas" can with difficulty be found in a book store. Even Somerset Maugham's great collection of stories of the white man's Orient have for some years lost their fascination for the young men and women who find in college their first taste for literature. The readers of an older day cannot help but feel that present-day youth has missed something, and yet perhaps the very fact that it has not been interested in those essentially romantic books and stories of white empire and adventure among the teeming millions of "natives" who dwell in the Pacific lands, is an indication that a change in world opinion has been under way, in the West as well as in the East.

There has been, of course, a continued literature of the Orient, books of travel with limited sales, adventure romances, novels of the old "glamorous" China. But the intellectual has not been concerned, except in E. M. Forster's "A Passage to India," which is still read in the Modern Library edition, and Malraux's "Man's Fate," to cite only two examples. These later books are not romantic in the sense that Kipling and Conrad are romantic. They are actually veiled attacks on the very system of white domination which Kipling glorified and which Conrad accepted as immutable, and if not always right, not to be questioned. The great success of Pearl Buck's novels of the Chinese resurrection, for the word revival is not sufficient to express a miracle, shows that the Western world has not been absorbed in the drama of the white man in the Orient, but in the people, the "natives," themselves.

For the last two decades, Europe and Russia have obsessed our writers. The East was left to the world traveller, to the escapist reader, and to the few minds vaguely conscious through a few books of the first breath of the approaching typhoon that was to sweep over steaming jungles and plantations, hurl itself against palm fringed islands set in blue seas, bringing war, revolution, and death to millions among that half of the population of the earth whom we dismissed as "brown" or "yellow," and of whom, to our shame, we have known so little.

Yet change had been making itself manifest in the interest of the American public even before the World War reached Pacific waters. The dramatic and heroic struggle waged by China against the Japanese invader had focussed the attention of the general public as well as the student of world politics upon the Orient as an arena of world affairs. The Burma Road was no longer an avenue to romance but to empire, and its defense a matter of paramount importance. And now that we are at war with one great Oriental power and an ally of another, we have at last come to see that the Far East is neither an exotic and fascinating background for romantic fiction, nor a rich setting for psychological works, but a part of the world with which we must live, as we must also with Europe, in amity, or else with it go down into a black age of civilization. Post-war writers on China and Japan will have to take count not only of the internal characteristics of those nations but of their relations to the world at large.

H. S.

Dust Storm

George Abbe

AND in that wind, the gray light sliding
Wintry and cold across the play of dust and sound,
A man, with his hand lifted in a queer shielding
Of eyes and mouth, and his coat caught and distorted,
And his shadow gone, and his knees buckling to the ground.
Low skies flew angled and bitter with the bite of dust,
And yellow light shifted and merged across the gray,
And there, stamped in my sight,
For a dying, eternal moment, against the gaunt tobacco barns' low leaning,
He poised, creature of awful meaning,
Weight of his body balanced against the dust storm's driving,
The yellow light and dust, and the long fields sliding
Crazily under foot.
He wavered; the hand thrust at the solid pouring and the body surged,
And slowly, like a plant being inch by inch uprooted,
He moved again, slanted himself against the roaring,
And was a living man, caught up from death—
Caught back from moment of unmoving—
Lifting his knees, steadily going
Across those fields with angled body and face,
Straight into the bitterest and bleakest blowing.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

For the Record

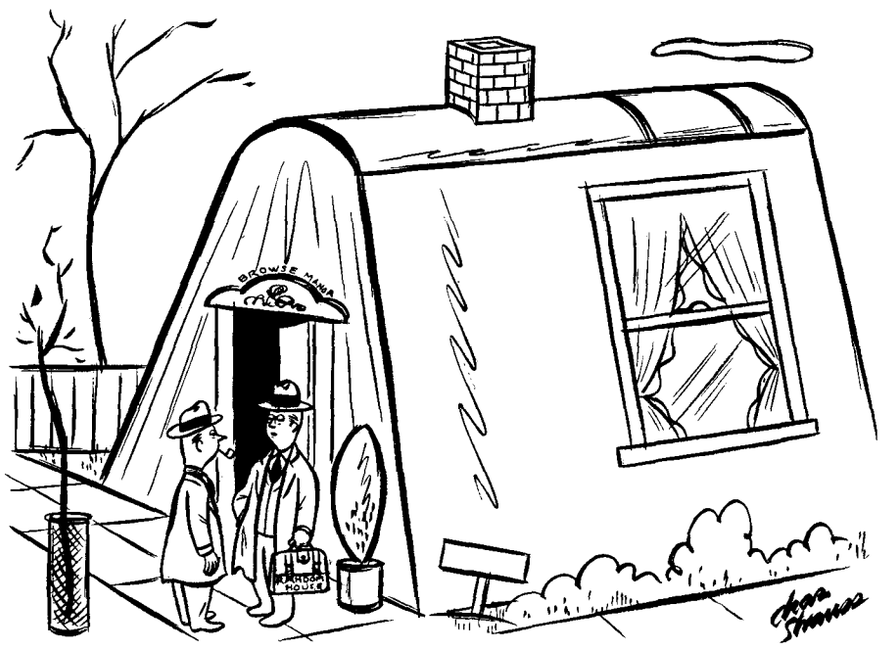
SIR:—In his letter in the January third issue of the *Saturday Review of Literature,* Dr. James Truslow Adams makes a number of trenchant points regarding accusations of plagiarism made against Daphne du Maurier in behalf of the Brazilian novelist Carolina Nabuco, and concludes " . . . unless the whole controversy is a publisher's publicity stunt."

On that point the record should be set straight at once. Miss Grant's article in the *Times* was printed without the prior knowledge of Miss du Maurier, her agents, or her publishers, and in form and content was hardly the kind of publicity which even the most irrepressible of press-agents could countenance.

In reply to Miss Alger's letter in the same issue on the same subject, Miss du Maurier has formally and categorically denied ever having seen Miss Nabuco's novel, or indeed ever having heard of Miss Nabuco prior to the inception of this unfortunate matter.

MALCOLM JOHNSON.

New York City



"There's nothing like coming home after a hard day at the office and forgetting about your work."

Whose Guard Was Down?

SIR:—Mr. Hugh Walpole's review of Irving Lee's "Language Habits in Human Affairs" is a dangerous sign of what we are up against in winning this war, and especially the peace that must follow it. Whether Messrs. Korzybski, Lee, Hayakawa, and Chase are superficial or profound in their analyses of language is debatable. What is *not* debatable—and what the last paragraph of Mr. Walpole's review makes abundantly clear—is that their warning against absolutist, black-vs.-white thinking could not be more timely. Says Mr. Walpole:

"The events of December 1941 and January 1942 leave this book and its predecessors dated indeed. . . . It is strange how the General Semanticists are caught with their guard down. 'Language in Action' praised certain newspapers for 'instinctively avoiding the unqualified two-valued orientation' where Hitler is concerned, and for reminding us 'of the external causes that produced Hitlerism and of the fascistic tendencies in our own nation.' Count Korzybski in his foreword to Dr. Lee's book says, 'No matter who wins this war, we will have to talk things over, which means the use of language.' As messages for the times, these already need revision. To quote Mr. Raymond Clapper: 'We know now that force must be used sometimes in the cause of justice.' "

In the first place, the use of Ray Clapper's obviously truthful statement is a complete *non sequitur* when applied to the statements that precede it. Where have these gentlemen denied the necessity of using force? Is it necessary to regard a German as a sub-human gorilla or a Japanese as a hairless monkey in order to oppose his totalitarian aggression? Not only is it unnecessary; it is fatal both from a military point of view (witness Pearl Harbor and Hong Kong) and from the point of view of a durable post-war world. In the second place, is it not the very mark of our national sanity and democracy that we *are* concerned about "fascistic tendencies in our own nation"? What would be the point of our fighting fascism if we were not? Finally, if our principal long-term purpose is not to avoid the mistakes of Versailles — national sovereignty, unequal access to raw materials and trade, a league without power, etc.— God help us, because we will have fought still another war in vain. Yet Mr. Walpole would apparently outlaw both conferences and the scientific definition of terms! Is it too much to hope that he will join those "children and such laymen as need to be rather shouted at" before it is too late?

SELDEN RODMAN

New York City

Basic English

SIR:—I have heard of Basic English, and of the "New Testament in Basic English." Now I have got it, and I am disappointed.

The aim of Basic English is to get along with the smallest possible vocabulary; it is not to produce the shortest possible phraseology. The doctrine, I find, is that the nouns are more basic than verbs, consequently a verb is if possible to be replaced by a paraphrase with an abstract noun. In Basic English I do not "know," I "have knowledge" or "am conscious"; I do not "die," I "undergo death" or "come to my end"; I do not "find," I "make discovery of"; and so on. In the four verses Acts 17 .28-30 ten verbs are thus replaced by abstract-noun phrases. One of them had been so handled in the old version, which said "have our being" where the original Greek said simply "are"; Basic English changes "our being" to "existence" and adds nine more in the four verses. It is all very unsatisfactory to one who has learned that it is bad style to use an abstract noun where a short straight verb would do the work.

I just do not believe that "knowledge," "discovery," "motion," "statement," are more basic in English than "know," "find," "move," "speak." Basic English is supposed to be an easier English for foreigners to learn; but this paraphrastic language is more unlike the foreign language than standard English is, if the foreign language is any with which I am familiar. Doubtless the result of Basic English is approximately real English as used by pedants, while if you kept the primitive verbs and threw out the abstract nouns you would sometimes get something strikingly different from any English that anybody but the reckless ever uses. But does training foreigners to use English as used by pedants pay for the trouble?

STEVEN T. BYINGTON

Ballard Vale, Mass.

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Psychiatry through the Ages

A HISTORY OF MEDICAL PSYCHOLOGY. By Gregory Zilboorg, M.D. In collaboration with George W. Henry, M.D. New York: W. W. Norton & Company. 1941. 589 *pp., and index.* $5.

Reviewed by BERTRAM D. LEWIN, M.D.

DR. ZILBOORG'S history of medical psychology, which makes up all but the last two special chapters of this long book, is exhaustive and erudite. It is quite the usual thing nowadays to evaluate the men who make history as part of their culture and time. Dr. Zilboorg goes beyond this. True to his psychiatric training, he breaks down the idea of "environment" to include not only the external milieu but also the inner needs of the human being. Hence, those parts of the book which are most successful are the ones dealing with periods that yield best to this type of analysis, while other parts, such as the history of the Greek and Roman medical psychology are less satisfactory.

That Greek and Roman history should be so is no fault of Dr. Zilboorg, for he has culled from the medical and philosophical writings of the ancients everything that would be relevant. But although we know that we owe to the old doctors and philosophers our insight into scientific method, our written legacy from them in respect of medical psychology is not great. What we have received is fragmentary and often aphoristic. We owe them many of our words—melancholia, mania, paranoia, delirium—and we have Hippocrates's famous contention that epilepsy is not a sacred disease but due to natural causes. But it is evident that the vast lacunae in our knowledge of those times prevent the application of Dr. Zilboorg's essential method. The writings which the medical historian necessarily consults concerning those days do not illuminate, and one comprehends better Spengler's statement that history among the Greeks was immediately turned into myth, and why such historians as Mitford spent so much space on mythology. For the dramatists throw more light on classic ideas of insanity than do the physicians and philosophers.

When applied to the period that follows Dr. Zilboorg's principle is unqualifiedly effective. With the political breakdown of the Roman Empire came the decline in science, indeed the persecution of scientific thought, the decline of learning and reason as guides to life and the upsurge of superstition. In two masterly chapters Dr. Zilboorg outlines "The Great Decline" and "The Restless Surrender to Demonology." Demonological astronomy and chemistry supplanted the natural science of the ancient world, and a demonological view of the human mind prevailed. Human history for centuries was guided by anxieties and fantasies. Dr. Zilboorg's fine study of the ruling opinions of this period and especially his subsequent chapter on "The Blows of the Witches' Hammer" are most original in historical writing. For although an economic interpretation of history has its merits when economics is one of the big facts, what but a psychologic interpretation and a proper evaluation of primary emotional motives will clarify a period such as the dark ages, that sets itself against reason? Or explain why the Church and the law seriously and methodically debated and prescribed how to tell a witch and what should be done with one?

The coming of the Enlightenment and the role of the humanist Vives (1492-1540), and the tough-minded physician Weyer (1515-1588), who studied witches and witchcraft as natural phenomena, are described in the chapter on "The First Psychiatric Revolution." From Weyer through Pinel (died 1826) is aptly termed "the period of reconstruction": it was marked by the progressive application of the natural science method to medicine and medical psychology. Man's innate resistance to this method when it is applied to his "soul" accounts for the relative slow progress of the mental sciences. Dr. Zilboorg's discussion of the motives which prevent man from facing himself as an object of scientific study is a brilliant example of his application of modern psychological thinking to the writing of history.

Modern psychiatry began with the nineteenth century. Pinel not only removed the shackles from his hospital patients, but also wrote objective case histories. From here on the story is relatively familiar. The century was marked by much progress in the understanding of the body and of disease in general. This progress was so impressive that psychiatrists became convinced that mental disease was brain disease, and they theorized accordingly. Bayle's discovery that general paralysis was a brain disease, its clinical description by Calmeil, Falret, and others, and finally the discovery of its syphilitic etiology, strengthened the determination of psychiatrists to do as well for other admirably described syndromes such as Kahlbaum's catatonia. Psychiatric science gained from the accumulation of careful observations and suffered from the stress put on systems. With Kraepelin, towards the end of the century, both tendencies came to full fruition; along with excellent descriptions, he established a tight and dogmatic system of mental diseases of the most authoritarian type.

—*Livaudan Delaware*

Meanwhile (Pinel and the Tukes must be mentioned here) the care of the insane became definitely a medical problem and was progressively improved. Meanwhile, too, though pushed into the background by the organicists, many men had seen the need for considering the psychological facts before them. Heinroth, Ideler, Reil, and others saw them not so much as symptoms of a brain disease, but in human terms of emotion and conflict. Out of mesmerism came hypnosis and its application by Charcot and the Nancy school to hysterical phenomena. Finally at the end of the century came what Dr Zilboorg calls "The Second Psychiatric Revolution." This revolution consisted in taking seriously the patient's psychology as the expression of an individual's mental state. Preëminently the chief revolutionist was Freud Bleuler applied Freudian interpretations to the major psychoses, and in this country Adolf Meyer valiantly stood for the study of the patient a an individual.

Thus we arrive at present-day medical psychology and its importance in our culture. It has become a revolutionizing and challenging science; it leads us to subject to scrutiny and revision concepts long held unthinkingly by psychiatrists and laymen alike Dr. Zilboorg brings us to the present

Dr. Henry's chapters on organic mental diseases and mental hospitals are in more conventional form. They deal in a concentrated form with topics only incidental to Dr. Zilboorg larger story. They are eminently competent and worthy of praise for their accuracy and completeness.

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Charles Scribner's Sons

EDITH M. STERN

CHARLES SCRIBNER, third of the name actively to head Charles Scribner's Sons, occupies an unpretentious office crowded with books and papers. His battered desk, which has served three generations, stands on a worn, ancient mat, around which yawn yards of unadorned cement flooring. Like Queen Mary's hats and Mrs. Roosevelt's hot dogs, the lack of fashionable décor and absence of front in the Scribner offices indicate the assurance of the patrician. Charles Scribner's Sons is a distinguished house.

The proverbial three-generation shirtsleeves appear at neither end of its inseparable family-firm history. Charles Scribner, founding grandfather, was descended from one appropriately named Matthew Scrivener, who was a member of the council of the Virginia colony in 1607: the name was changed after 1742. Son of a wealthy New York merchant, husband of John I. Blair's daughter, Charles studied for the law, but delicate health gave him an excuse to indulge his inclinations towards literature. With a drygoods merchant, Isaac Baker, as partner, he started the firm of Baker and Scribner, publishers and booksellers, in 1846. Next year Andrew G. Armstrong, experienced in religious books, became a third partner.

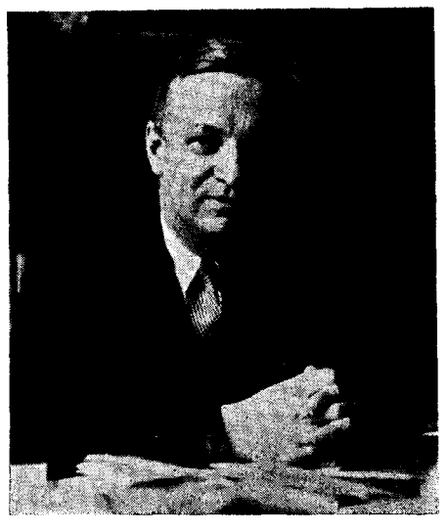
Original headquarters were in the chapel of the Old Brick Church at Park Row and Nassau Streets. The building, a contemporary magazine records, had been "given over to Mammon": for some time it had been occupied by booksellers. Nevertheless a religious tinge colored the new firm's activities. One of its first moves was to buy the stock of John S. Taylor, religious book publishers. Its early publications were nearly all theological. Clergymen helped push "The Sacred Mountains" to over half a million copies by talking about it from their pulpits, distributing advertisements among the pews. Later, a $100,000 investment in an American edition of Lange's "Commentary on the Bible" produced a series of volumes bigger and better than the German.

Among secular publications sponsored by the first Charles Scribner, "Napoleon and His Marshals" and "George Washington and His Generals" were best sellers. "The Battle Summer," by Ik Marvel (Donald G. Mitchell) flopped, but the same author's subsequent "Reveries of a Bachelor" contributed to the substantial heritage of the next generation.

Baker died in 1850: Scribner carried on under his own name. Upon his death in 1871, the firm's name was again changed to Scribner, Armstrong and Co., and John Blair Scribner, the founder's eldest son, succeeded to the presidency. In 1874 a move to Broadway and Astor Place began a series of treks uptown that concluded at the present 597 Fifth Avenue building, in 1912. Armstrong withdrew from the company in 1878 to carry on as A. C. Armstrong and Son, and the original firm was rechristened, this time finally, as Charles Scribner's Sons. In 1879 death ended John's brief headship, and his younger brother Charles took complete charge.

Until the second Charles Scribner, publisher, died in 1930, he steadily and solidly built the house. He retained his intellectual vitality to the end, recognizing, in his seventies, the genius of such newcomers as Hemingway and Wolfe. Under him Scribners published Victorian and Edwardian giants like Meredith, Stevenson, Barrie, and Galsworthy, Americans like Brander Matthews, Henry Van Dyke, and Thomas Nelson Page; under him, too, they welcomed iconoclasts like Ring Lardner and Scott Fitzgerald. "My father was the real genius of the family," the reigning Charles Scribner told me unenviously. Even H. L. Mencken spilled no vitriol between the garish covers of his August, 1930, *Mercury* when he commemorated the publisher's passing. "Mr. Scribner was an excellent business man," he wrote, " . . . but there was no sign in any of his enterprises that he regarded profit as an end in itself. Always his main effort was bent toward printing better books, and so augmenting the honor of his firm. He made it, in the end, one of the sound and salient institutions of the country. In the world of books its place today is that of the Pennsylvania Railroad in transportation or that of the Morgan house in finance."

Until 1932, Arthur H. Scribner a younger brother of the deceased, headed the firm. In 1933, several months after his uncle Arthur's death, Charles Scribner succeeded to the presidency he still holds. Urbane, vigorous, ubiquitous, he regards the business as a family trust handed on from generation to generation: it never occurred to him to be anything but a publisher and he, too, has a son Charles. But though there is one-man control—Scribner O.K.'s the expenditure of every line of copy directed by advertising manager William Weber, gives



Charles Scribner

sanction to every manuscript accepted—the Scribner list is not, as it never has been, the expression of one man's taste. Personal preferences, Charles Scribner believes, should not determine a list. It is a publisher's business to publish books worth publishing, whether or not they fit in with his own prejudices or enthusiasms.

Scribner publications are, therefore, catholic—non-fiction in the current catalogue, for instance, includes "America's Housekeeping Book," "The Oracles of Nostradamus," and "Everyday Things in American Life." They are, also, selective, with the guiding principle of quality. For a house of its age and magnitude, Scribner's seasonal announcements are limited: fiction, especially, is highly selective. The firm has never gone in for what were once hammock, now circulating library, novels. It prefers creating potential backlog with new authors of promise. Mr. Scribner, as publisher of "For Whom the Bell Tolls," "The Yearling," and "The Last Puritan" is without suspicion of sour grapes when he deplores the contemporary tendency for standardized reading which makes a few sellers overwhelm good first novels.

Maxwell E. Perkins, sensitive, gentle, and modest vice-president and editor of the house, has a reputation for discovering genius. He says it isn't justified; that no editor ever "discovers" or "encourages" talent; that all one can do is realize what's there and keep it from being bruised or destroyed. If an editor doesn't recognize the merits in a script, he's to blame; if he does, he's just doing his job. Mr. Perkins told me, for instance, that when art critic Willard Huntington Wright showed him three fiction scenarios, he simply advised him to go ahead and write the stories. The rest is S. S. Van Dine history . . . As for that famous F. Scott Fitzgerald "discovery," well, Scott had a manuscript in which the jewels were obscured by

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the pebbles. Scribners turned down "This Side of Paradise." So did two other publishers to whom Perkins, at Fitzgerald's request, submitted this manuscript for him. Perkins and Fitzgerald had dinner together at the Harvard Club: a year later Fitzgerald submitted a revised script. When it was accepted, Mr. Scribner warned the young author, "Now you mustn't count on its selling big—10,000 for a first novel, you know, is noteworthy." "I'll be satisfied with 40,000," Scott Fitzgerald said confidently. And he was! . . . Another author nurtured by Mr. Perkins was Thomas Wolfe, with whom he worked night after night. "But," he maintains, "I can create nothing. I can just help people realize themselves." By a happy circumstance that made a newlywed *New York Times* reporter abandon the hazards of journalism for the stability of a book publishing job, Scribner's, thirty-one years ago, acquired a great editor.

Juvenile editor Alice Dalgliesh came to Scribner's six years ago: before that she had been a teacher at the Horace Mann school and instructor in Children's Literature at Teacher's College. To a backlist including Scribner's Illustrated Classics, books by Dan Beard, a library of Hentys, and such perennials as Mary Mapes Dodge's "Hans Brinker of the Silver Skates" and Frances Hodgson Burnett's "Little Lord Fauntleroy," she adds about twenty new titles annually. An inexpensive series of biographies feature characters who have performed some kind of social service, such as Clara Barton and Henry Bergh, originator of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. "George Washington's World," by Genevieve Foster, takes children from country to country to give them a complete picture of world affairs and their bearing on what was going on at that time. Miss Dalgliesh takes pride, too, in the watercolor reproductions in some of her publications. They appear in her own "Wings around South America," one of the twenty books of which she is author. By arrangement with Scribners, she has time for writing as well as editing.

Miss Dalgliesh is not the only Scribner employee who has made a name outside the office. F. N. Doubleday once was a Scribner office boy. Predecessor of the omniscient "Watson" —Robert S. Watson, secretary to Mr. Scribner and to his father before him —was a young man named Edward Bok. Among other employees who were to gain outside fame were John Hall Wheelock, the poet, and William Crary Brownell, the critic.

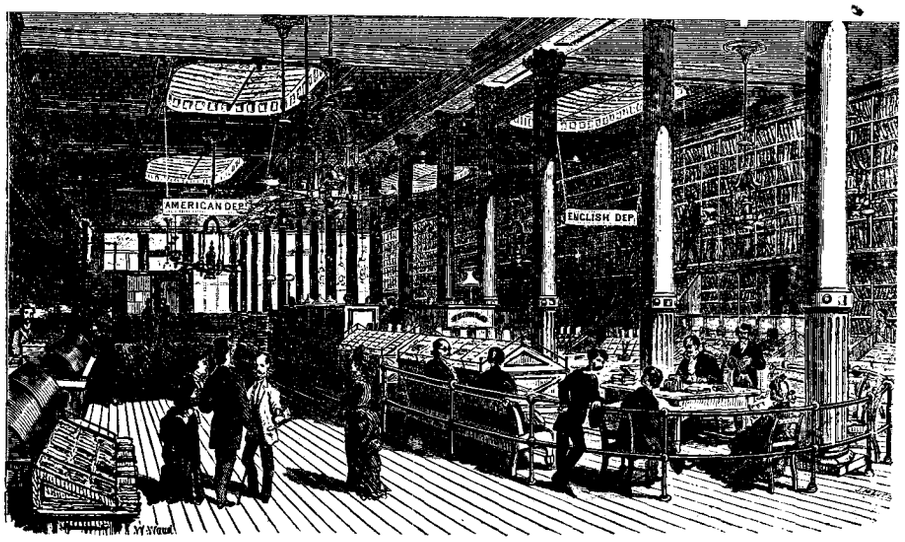
Responsible for a limited, carefully chosen religious book list is William L. Savage who, incredibly, came to his present post from being editor of sporting books. The latter department thrives largely on English importations and on the widespread knowledge of Mr. Scribner's interest in horses and fox-hunting—sooner or later every American or English manuscript on those subjects seems to come up for acceptance or rejection.

Edward T. S. Lord heads a textbook department whose volume of over $1,000,000 a year frequently equals that of the trade department which is directed by Whitney Darrow, a Vice-President, who, when Princeton University last June conferred upon him an honorary degree, was described as "a man of boundless energy and initiative." Most of the Scribner texts are elementary: outstanding, at present, is The Wonder World of Science series. Occasionally a trade list book, like "The Yearling," is put into school reader form: often an old standby sweetens the balance sheet. Gordy's "History of the United States," for instance, published in 1899, sold by the million and is still going. The list of college texts has been relatively small, though as long ago as thirty years ago Linn's "Essentials of English Composition" was used by four-fifths of the colleges.

Carroll B. Merritt, over thirty years with the firm, heads a department unusual for a general publisher. From five branch offices, in as many cities, local salespeople go forth and take orders for Scribner subscription sets at so much down and so much a month. The subscription department had a successful beginning in 1875 with William Cullen Bryant's "Popular History of the United States" and the first American edition of the Encyclopaedia Britannica, which sold at six dollars a volume. Subscription sets are not sold at retail bookstores; only by mail order and by canvassers. They are a substantial and profitable part of the firm's business. The "Copeland Reader" has sold 50,000 sets. D A B and D A H—the firm's intimate alphabetization of the "Dictionary of American Biography" and the "Dictionary of American History"—are among its latest successes. There are subscription editions of classics like Dickens and Tolstoy and Keats; of Scribner authors like Hemingway and S. S. Van Dine; of other firms' authors, like Ellen Glasgow and Eugene O'Neill. Mark Sullivan's "Our Times," though sold in separate volumes by the trade was originally projected as a subscription set.

Another profitable Scribner unit is the bookstore, which has a wide stock of the books of all publishers, and carries nothing else but social stationery. Sales people get no bonus for pushing Scribner books. "And here," said Mr. Scribner, escorting me through the woodpanelled, library-like rare book department at the rear, "is what makes it possible to have a bookstore on Fifth Avenue." David A. Randall, formerly of the Brick Row Bookshop, then in business for himself, is in charge: John Carter is the permanent buyer in England. Sales of volumes and manuscripts range from a few to a few thousand dollars.

In addition to selling subscription sets and rare books, Scribners have other deviations from the publishing norm. Almost alone among general publishers it has its own press and bindery, housed in a building at 311 West 43rd Street. Its English house, a branch of the American, is the converse of most Anglo-American publishing setups in which the English branch is the parent corporation. Charles Scribners Sons Ltd., developed from the London office, established in 1857, acts as a supply line for the rare book department, published Scribner books in England, and exports English books in bulk. Only occasionally does it initiate a publication. Most of Scribner's



The interior of the Scribner Book Store on Broadway in 1880.

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English authors have been secured through the travels of one of the Scribners or by some other member of the firm. Arthur Scribner, for instance, captured Stanley's "Darkest Africa" at a time when other American publishers were awaiting his return to England, by meeting him in Africa the moment he emerged from the jungle.

In the sideline of magazine publishing, Scribner's has had a history of starts and stops.

Hours at Home, begun in 1865 and edited by Richard Watson Gilder, was discontinued in 1870 to make way for *Scribner's Monthly.* In 1873 *St. Nicholas* was founded; it was sold in 1880 to the Century Company. *Architecture,* purchased in 1917, was sold in 1936. Most checkered is the history of *Scribner's Monthly,* the successor to *Hours at Home.* This magazine, edited by Josiah Gilbert Holland, was acquired by the Century Company in 1881 and became the *Century Magazine.* As soon as Charles Scribner's agreement with the *Century,* not to publish another magazine for seven years, expired, *Scribner's Magazine* appeared. For many years it had a distinguished career. Early in its history it printed unpublished letters of Thackeray, edited by James Russell Lowell; later it had as contributors such writers and illustrators as Henry James, Edith Wharton, Richard Harding Davis, Ernest Hemingway, John Galsworthy, Howard Pyle, Charles Dana Gibson, and A. B. Frost.

Later when literary magazines found it increasingly difficult to compete with periodicals of large circulation, *Scribner's Magazine* ceased to be a profitable part of the firm. An attempt was made to revive it when Harlan Logan was called in as editor and manager in 1936. Later Logan and a group of his associates purchased the magazine and formed a company under the name of Harlan Logan Associates, later Magazine Associates, who planned to develop a group of publications. In 1939 the company went into voluntary bankruptcy and *The Commentator* bought the name, all Scribner connection having previously been severed. Charles A. Scribner's Sons itself has been completely innocent of any participation in the notorious *Scribner's Commentator.*

The Scribner name on books embodies a tradition of publishing *noblesse oblige.* The controlling family —the personnel—the history of the house—the titles on its list—all evidence the dignity, integrity, and taste of Charles Scribner's Sons.

This is the fifth in a series of articles on the publishing houses of America.

Totem-Pole People

SMOKE FROM THEIR FIRES, the Life of a Kwawiutly Chief. By Clellan S. Ford. New Haven: Yale University Press. 1941. 248 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by OLIVER LA FARGE

THIS simple, charming narrative of a man's life illustrates particularly well certain problems about what threatens to become a new development in writing, minor perhaps, but interesting. Left-Handed's autobiography, "Son of Old Man Hat," ably edited by Walter Dyk, and Radin's "Crashing Thunder," already show that in clear, forceful, attractive style and in directness and honesty of mind American Indians have a literary talent which may develop interestingly. To scientists the autobiographies of Indians or other so-called "primitive" men have an obvious usefulness. But it happens increasingly that when these have been written, the scientist sees that he has something of wider interest, something to be published as a book of unfrightening appearance rather than entombed in the esoteric format of a "report."

But who is in fact the author? In the present case, Mr. Ford, or Chief Charles James Nowell, whose name appears neither on the jacket nor the title page? From this question arises the second: how much should the recorder intrude himself? He has worked hard to get the story, he feels possessive about it. He is accustomed to interpreting and arranging material, but an autobiography must be presented as is. His name goes on the book. He has urges of an author without the substance, and he is tempted to make the work his by introducing himself on every page.

In "Smoke from Their Fires," Mr. Ford provides a forty-page introduction summarizing Kwawiutl culture—the "totem-pole" people of our Northwest Coast. With that, I think, he should have gracefully retired. But the author's urge has driven him to lavish footnotes upon the book, explaining the obvious, usually superfluous, sometimes so puerile as to insult the reader, occasionally ridiculous, always irritating.

Some of these footnotes are so comical that one is tempted to give many examples. One is so irresistible that I cannot resist quoting it: Nowell remarks that he could not have affairs with his friends' wives. The editor comments, in part, ". . . A friend might regard seduction of his wife as an unfriendly act . . . !"

I have reviewed the editing rather than the story itself. This autobiography is pleasant and informative, and one grows fond of the subject of it. From a literary point of view it is not "important." But if in fact there is a valuable potential in Indian self-expression, then the manner of presenting it is important.

Your Literary I. Q.

By Howard Collins

FICTION'S FAMOUS SERVANTS

Here are ten more literary figures whose careers as servants have made them immortal. (Others appeared in May 11, 1940.) How many of them do you remember? Allowing 5 points for each one you can call by name, and another 5 if you can remember the story in which he appears, a score of 60 is par, 70 is good, 80 or better is excellent. Answers are on page 22.

1. A water carrier in the service of Her Majesty's army in India, he was killed in action.
2. The perfect butler, he exercised an iron hand on the raiment and love life of Bertie Wooster, his employer.
3. Inspired by a couple of shyster lawyers, this landlady brought suit for breach-of-promise against her gentleman lodger.
4. When a gang of thieves plotted to surprise and kill her master by hiding in a bunch of jars, this servant saved his life by pouring boiling oil on them.
5. Though his master unhesitatingly risked a fortune by stopping to rescue this French valet from a Chinese mob while they were making a record-breaking round-the-world trip, his pay was nevertheless docked because he had left the gas burning while they were away.
6. He was the butler in the service of Lady Verinder, and "Robinson Crusoe" served as his Bible.
7. When this romantic novel-reading servant girl married the hired man, he undertook to cure her of her fantastic notions by honeymooning in an insane asylum.
8. This butler was once in the employ of an English nobleman who lost him, in a poker game, to a Western American millionaire.
9. On the night before she died, this ancient beldame aided Porphyro to elope with Madeline.
10. Because she was slightly deaf, this nurserymaid mistakenly apprenticed the boy in her charge to a pirate instead of a pilot.

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LETTER TO A NOVELIST, 1960

(*Continued from page 4*)

them the waste and abuse of human resources, and you may begin to wonder where we could have found any margin for optimism.

I am parading all these skeletons in democracy's closets because I don't want you to think that we were blind to the weak points in our democratic make-up, or that we were fooled into thinking that we were defending a perfect democracy. Would you, then, like to know what we were fighting for?

RIGHT off the bat, it ought to be known that we are fighting not because of democracy's weaknesses, but because of its strengths, because of what it has offered in the past, and because of our hopes for what it will offer in the future. We are fighting because all history has yielded up no better way for a people to make evolution and progress a reality, because the alternatives have proved themselves false. . . .

We are fighting, then, because democracy is a chance. And soft and sentimental as it may sound to a cynic, we are fighting because we want the chance to eliminate past weaknesses, because we know those weaknesses are not inherent in democracy, nor are they the inevitable price we have to pay for free institutions. They are our own weaknesses, and we are fighting—not for the automatic reward of a perfect democracy when the fight is won—but because we want to make the most of the chance that only a victory can give to prove ourselves more worthy of democracy in the future than we have been in the past.

(Only half a dozen years ago, we, too, would have looked at this last paragraph and smiled at what might have seemed a kindly but hopelessly idealistic naiveté.)

What this all means is that we are fighting because we want to keep decisions in our own hands. We are fighting for the sacred privilege of making mistakes and for the even greater privilege of attempting to set them right. We are fighting not only for the right to think, but for time to think.

We are fighting to prove that the human family is greater than any of its self-appointed tribes, to prove that people from many lands can live in one land and be united not only in the principles for which it stands but in their determination to preserve those principles at any cost. We are fighting because America is the laboratory which can reveal to the world the richness and good and potentialities within people who belong to only one race—the race of the living.

Maybe this is too much sweetness and light for your taste. Maybe this sounds too high-falutin, but wait, there's plenty more of the same.

We are fighting to protect and maintain what millions all through history have fought to obtain piece by piece. Thousands of years of blood, sweat, and tears went into the making of values now at stake. By what right can any of us stand aloof from that fight now?

That is the inheritance we are fighting for. It is not a perfect inheritance, to be sure, for if it were perfect we should all be living in Utopia. But it is a good inheritance, an inheritance which has contributed more to the general evolution of humanity and civilization than any other plan or system or blueprint ever applied as a design for living for large numbers of people. This inheritance has its roots not only in the American Revolution, but, indeed, in all history—back through England and the Protestant Reformation to Rome and Greece, while others of its roots are to be found in the Scriptures. Finally, it is the inheritance of the full promise of democracy yielded up by the ages themselves.

We are fighting to fulfill this promise. Culturally, America can be on the threshold of the greatest era since the Revolution of Awareness in Athens. It is not only that this country has begun to assume a definite national cultural pattern during the last fifty years, and particularly during the last twenty, nor only that we have begun to develop an art and a literature and a music and an architecture which have their roots and their inspiration in the country, the people, their needs, and their goals. It is that the long journey of the world's cultural center of gravity from East to West has reached America. Sooner or later it was bound to happen. But the tragedy of Europe accelerated the process; indeed, it has been marked by the transplanting of human genius as well. Like Athens, America has become the school of the world, attracting to itself active, creating minds hungry for progress. Nor is it fair to say that all this represented nothing more than the search for safety; there was a search, to be sure, but it was the search for a place where free minds could live in an atmosphere congenial and stimulating to expression and development.

Politically, we are fighting because we have the chance, if only we will recognize it and accept it, of bringing to life the purest democracy the world has seen for almost twenty-five hundred years. Individual participation in democracy, because of the mechanical revolution, is now possible on a scale never before realized in the modern world. We have, in the phenomena of radio and the printing press, to say nothing of other mechanical miracles, the tools through which an interested citizenry can become not only an enlightened citizenry but a participating citizenry. If the true democracy, in the Aristotelian sense, should be brought within the range of a man's voice, then radio has provided America with potentialities for democracy such as "are not dreamt of in your philosophy."

Does this seem too abstract, too remote? All right, let's talk about something a little more concrete. We are fighting because of two words, "interrelationship" and "interdependency"—perhaps the two most important words of the twentieth century. For as the years pass—no, even as the minutes pass—it becomes dramatically apparent that interrelationship and interdependency wind through every aspect of the lives of nations and those of their peoples. Whether in respect to government, culture, economics, or even daily living, the close connections and interconnections, new and old, seen and unseen, link the entire human race in a great planetary unit.

This much, at least, a new geography dominated by the revolution in transportation and communication has done. But the great problem created by this planetary unit is whether it will be organized or whether it will be permitted to continue as a super-Balkans; whether the attempt to coordinate the unit will be done under democratic or totalitarian auspices, or, putting it another way, whether the world association will be attempted through organization or subjugation.

It is here that the promise of the great democratic states, as it concerns the world, takes on its full meaning. And in no small measure does this promise rest on Americans themselves. As we see it today, whether America meets that responsibility depends, first of all, of course, upon the chance to do so which only a victory can give; secondly, upon American realism in recognizing that the job has to be done, and that she, together with Great Britain, is in the most advantageous position to initiate and carry through moves in that direction.

We believe, in other words, that America and Great Britain can and should sound the call for the long-overdue convention of the world's best minds—a World Convention which can consider the interests not of any one

(*Continued on page 18*)

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(*Continued from page* 16)

people, but of all peoples. It can be a World Convention similar in many respects to the American Constitutional Convention which brought cosmos out of the chaos or near-chaos that existed in the decade following the War for Independence. This analogy bears stressing, because the principal problems as they relate to a geographical grouping of states today are those strongly similar to the organizational problems faced and solved by the founders of this country. Mutuality in geography, as *The Federalists* emphasized so many times, was and always will be the greatest single factor in determining the necessity and feasibility for union, and all the world today shares a geographical mutuality—the legacy of our industrial revolution—which, if anything, is even greater than that of the American states in 1789.

What about diversity of peoples as a dominant factor standing in the way of any overall union today? Here, too, the American experience is relevant, for contrary to general impression, the foundation of America was laid upon an extremely broad and varied base of peoples. But union was accomplished, despite such diversity and despite an earlier failure at union following the Revolution. The American colonies made good at their second chance—largely through a study of the past—a past in which all history yielded up its lessons as they related both to political organization and federation of geographical units.

We hope and think that the world, too, can have a second chance; that the world geographical unit today is no more predestined to failure because of the unfortunate experience of the League of Nations than were the American states because of their unfortunate experience under the Articles of Confederation. It is a second chance for the world but we are afraid, melodramatic as it may sound, that it may also be a last chance—at least in our lifetimes and probably in yours.

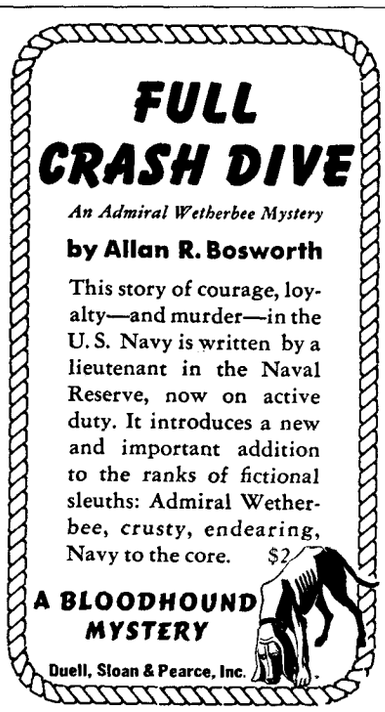
Interrelationship and interdependency. As these notes are written early in 1942, it seems as though they are words which, if ignored, can deprive us not only of the logical rewards of victory—if we have it within us to be victorious—but of the basis for any hope that man may be able to harness and control the machinery of peace as well as he has the machinery of war. But interrelationship and interdependency are also words which, if intelligently recognized and practically applied for the common good, can serve as the key blocks in a new and durable structure for which civilization is waiting so impatiently.

If only from the standpoint of economics—and it is in the economic field that our interrelationships with the world are strongest and most apparent—America may find it difficult to hide behind any walls. If we make the same mistake as we did after the last war, and settle smugly in our own little backyard, we have a right to expect what we all now fear: geared as it is to national defense, with millions of citizens engaged in defense industries, and with a rapid production trying desperately to keep up with an even more rapid consumption, the national economy will find it difficult to survive the stoppage brought by an isolated peace.

It is easy enough to talk about the richness of the cultural possibilities within America, and the vitalizing potentialities of individual participation in government, but how can any of this be realized if America will become sick economically, if millions of Americans who devoted themselves to the struggle for democracy's survival should lose their stake in democracy? If, in the world to come, after all the anguish and sacrifice necessary to save democracy, it develops that the struggle was an end in itself, that we have missed or abused the chance to make of our economic life a less haphazard and costly affair than it has been in the past, then we shall have to recognize that democracy will be living on borrowed time.

Certainly, it cannot be said that economic opportunities will be lacking if democracy wins. The world, with all its "age," with all its wars and crowded populations, has only begun to be developed. There is as yet only a hint of the tremendous resources waiting to be tapped. This is not a matter of plundering the world, but of lending our hand in the rebuilding and economic stabilization of a planet choked with the debris of war and hopelessly divided by trade barriers.

We are fighting, then, to make the most of this economic chance, just as we are fighting to make the most of every chance which, as I have said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ALPHABET HICKS *Rex Stout* (Farrar & Rinehart: $2.)	Murder in grounds of Westchester plastics plant solved by unpredictable investigator whose methods are eccentric but effective.	Expertly constructed plot, interesting and amusing sleuth, pay-off that brings up nice legal point, and some satisfying romantic touches.	Better grade
THE CASE OF THE TALKING DUST *John Donavan* (Mystery House: $2.)	Crushed corpse in vacant London house gives Sgt. Johnny Lamb problem that finally crumbles beneath his superior erudition.	Identification of corpse and trailing of killer soundly and scientifically handled—but pace is rather lethargic.	Pedestrian
MURDER'S LITTLE HELPER *Garland Lord* (Crime Club: $2.)	Corpse of actress under N. Y. rooming house bed alarms visiting Californian and makes trouble for her, husband, and police.	Highly atmospheric and rather hysterical story of theatrical and movie people, with some good chatter and "cheerfully philosophic" murderer.	A bit feverish
MURDER OF A NOVELIST *Sally Wood* (Simon & Schuster: $2.)	New England village peace disturbed by murders of philandering writer and hapless secretary. Serene spinster beats sheriff to solution.	For readers who place superior character work and excellent writing ahead of slam-bang action and plot—though those are adequate.	Effective

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before, only a democratic victory can provide.

BUT standing in front of all these considerations—economic, political, cultural, and everything else—like a beacon so bright, so powerful that it dominates every issue, every question, is one rock-bottom fact:

We are fighting because we must; indeed, because we have no choice in the matter. We are fighting because this ugly backwash of the past that some have preferred to see as the wave of the future has come upon us. It has carried with it forces that have made a decision for us that many of us had believed only we ourselves could make. These forces have correctly interpreted the nature of the struggle—even though many of us had not—and have realized that America must be cut down not only because it stands in the way of their program but because it is part of their program.

Yes; we are fighting to beat back and destroy a monstrous challenge. The form of this challenge leaves no choice except to attempt to stamp it out by force. For we can do little in this world about overcoming the doctrine that might makes right until the right becomes mighty.

We are fighting because we cannot risk the consequences of defeat. Because that defeat might mean a turning point downward in the life not only of America but of all civilization. Extreme and idealistic as that may sound, it nevertheless appears to us a cold and sober reality—much too cold and much too sober. Too many times have nations, and civilizations along with them, lost their footing and fallen into obscurity or oblivion to justify a complacent feeling that it can never happen to us.

* * *

This, at any rate, is how we feel about it. Any questions?

You want to know whether we feel the same moral repugnance about war, even though we are in it, as you do? Don't we know that war is barbarism?

Hell, yes. But how are you going to fight barbarism unless you fight it? That's the way it's been for 5000 years, and that's the way it is today.

One minute. There's a question I'd like to ask. Instead of spending so much time in futile recrimination over the past, why don't you do something positive and constructive for your own generation? After all, all we are fighting for today is to give you the chance to make that better world we've been talking about so much. You still have that chance.

Or do you?

This article was adapted from a chapter in "The Good Inheritance," to be published next month by Coward-McCann.

Dynamism and the Doctor

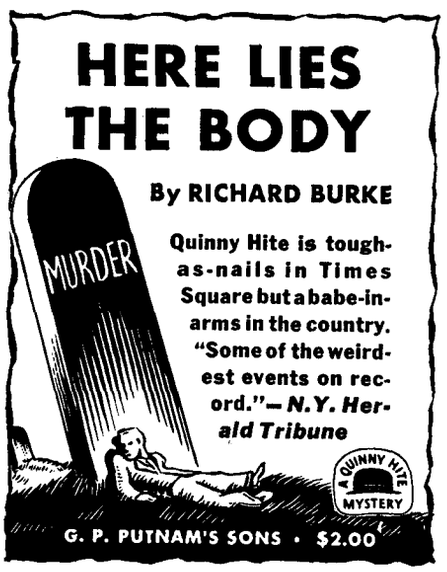
DOCTOR WOOD, MODERN WIZARD OF THE LABORATORY. By William Seabrook. New York: Harcourt Brace & Co. 1941. 320 pp. $3.75.

Reviewed by MABEL S. ULRICH

THE life of the handsome, seventy-three-year old physicist, Robert W. Wood, has had from its beginning enough explosive drama to satisfy even devoted followers of Superman and the Lone Ranger. When tremendous energy is combined with dynamic temperament, drama and explosions are inevitable. And there can be no question that Dr. Wood has had—and has—more than his share of both. To his dazzled biographer he is "Gargantuan," "Promethean" "fantastic," "impish," a "Promethean poltergeist," whose achievements and "egocentric impudence" kept—still keep—his colleagues and family swinging from awe to exasperation.

The "poltergeist" and the restless curiosity that drove him into science seem to have emerged simultaneously and at an early age. The life of Dr. Wood, as recounted by Mr. Seabrook, is the story of these twin urges at work and at play in childhood, at Harvard, as teacher at Wisconsin and Johns Hopkins Universities. If both biographer and subject seem to linger more fondly over past "pranks" than scientific explorations, that is not to belittle the importance of Dr. Wood's more lasting contributions. It was his original work on the physics of light that first brought him fame. He was the father of many of our most useful appliances; the sodium lamps of our highways, the "electric thaw" of plumbing, animated cartoons, tear gas, and many gadgets of modern warfare. He has published 263 scientific articles—(listed at the back of the book). More surprising, as scientific criminologist he has helped the police to solve several murders, besides exposing mediums and other frauds. Still more surprising, he is the author of that delectable little book "How To Tell the Birds from the Flowers," and of several thrillers in collaboration with Arthur Train. In World War I he was commissioned by request to serve with the French Bureau of Invention. He has traveled extensively, partly for study, partly for fun, partly to receive the honors and awards showered on him by admiring societies. Mr. Seabrook relates his story directly under the eye of his hero, and for elaboration he often turns over the microphone to Dr. Wood himself, an excellent expedient since the professor invariably is terse and clear in his explanations of his experiments.

All this makes for lusty biography, and those who admire Mr. Seabrook's fervid crescendos are sure to enjoy it. But it must be confessed that this reviewer was left at the end feeling as she does after reading a letter charged with exclamation points; and if truth must out, more than a little weary of the Professor's "impishness." But then, she happens to be one who holds that while the cutting of capers may be fun, the reading of them seldom is. Moreover, she likes her heroes of science to linger in her mind as scientists rather than as prankish middle-aged Tom Sayers—yes, even when they are "as American as a hickory tree." Nevertheless, she cheerfully concedes that face to face with Dr. Wood's qualities, almost any biographer might turn for comfort to these proofs that the Olympian wizard was after all at heart only a small boy cutting up.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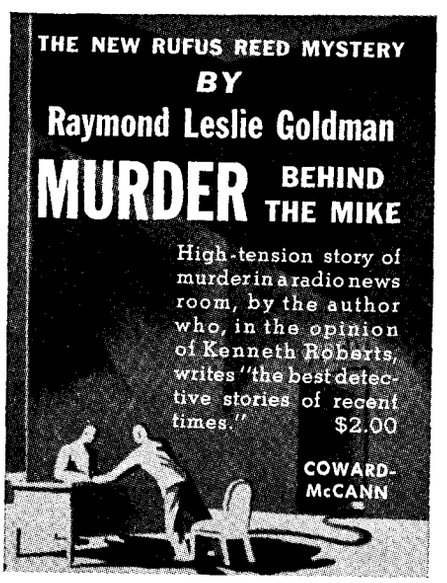
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Higher Education

THE U. S. COLLEGE GRADUATE. By F. Lawrence Babcock. New York: The Macmillan Company. 1941. 112 *pp.* $1.50.

Reviewed by ORDWAY TEAD

THIS is a book, among others, for the discouraged college educator. That there is plenty wrong with college education is the not unfamiliar theme of many a recent study. This book does not, however, indulge in any wishful generalization to the contrary, nor in any polyanna conclusion. Rather it is the result of a statistical inquiry undertaken by the staff of *Time* magazine to determine whether higher education justifies itself. For, " . . . the urgencies of these critical times demand of learning that it also prove itself an instrument of practical democracy, a tangible aid to a higher standard of living in which culture may thrive and perpetuate itself out of its own vigor."

It is impossible and inexpedient to recapitulate the summary findings. But they do reveal quite overwhelmingly a total differential on the part of the "graduate bloc" of 2,700,000 living alumni as over against the rest of the population—a clear advantage in income, in types of occupation followed, in "dynamic contribution of the individual to making tick the society in which he lives." And they also disclose a considerable advantage in what appears to be the quality of education supplied in the private, endowed college and university. As between graduates with science degrees and those with liberal arts credentials, the data may seem slightly to favor the more vocational course as far as subsequent earnings are concerned. But the author explains why he tentatively concludes that the comparisons "tend to support rather than overturn the theory that the liberal arts are the base and foundation of our system of higher education."

The comfort offered the educator—once he grants the assumption that income reflects total cultural attainment—is that something seems to have been gained from the college experience enjoyed by graduates of the last fifty years which markedly elevated their capacity to supply services upon which the community has put a relatively high social value. Disturbing questions about how the initial selection of college students takes place may arise, but it is pointed out that selection is today upon a far wider social base than formerly. And the author suggests that "education is likely to be a *means* to a higher standard of living, rather than a mere *reflection* of family origin with a higher parental purchasing power." (Italics his.)

The facts as to what college does for women in terms of marital, family, and career eventualities merit sober reflection. What interpretation is to be placed upon them will depend upon the reader's sociological preconceptions.

But this study for the most part leaves evaluation of its findings to you and me. If one derives comfort from the fact that college graduates get on better, one is still left with unanswered questions about relative 'psychic" incomes of total life-satisfactions. Is the process too expensive in time and money? Or should we spend far more? Could results be better and more surely attained? Why doesn't the exposure "take" more often and more deeply? These are today pertinent questions, but they are not yet susceptible to quantified study.

THE LITERARY PULSE . . .

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Doctor Business

BEHIND THE MASK OF MEDICINE. By Miles Atkinson, M.D. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1941. 348 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by W. L. RICH

PERHAPS you are tired of reading about doctors, diseases, and medicine. Yet it would be a mistake to overlook this book, for Dr. Atkinson has quite a lot to say about this doctor business that is fresh, lively, and challenging. His chief concern is with the whys and wherefores of those inhibitions that have prevented society from taking full advantage of the extraordinary discoveries of the past century. "The old order changeth," he points out in his introduction, "and as yet we have not got the new order straight."

He starts his argument with a quick summary of the part medicine has played in our evolving civilization, and shows how during the past century "with little or no warning a large dose of science has been injected suddenly into what had been before solely a humanity." The background brushed in, the author turns to the patient and his physician. Several breezy chapters explain the various steps in their progressing relationship, and the weaknesses of their respective attitudes are genially exposed. Here the patient will find the answers to many of his unvoiced questions. Why all this fuss about history taking? Why, when you drop in at the doctor's office, merely for some dope for that little pain, do you have to see and pay for half a dozen experts? What rights have you when you want a consultation? Why can't you have any doctor you want? What are "professional ethics" anyhow? Dr. Atkinson understands more than most doctors how you feel about all these things, and he not only gives you satisfactory answers but enlivens them with gay incidents. He even discusses the painful question of fees and agrees with you that they need some form of standardization. From personalities he turns to the growing evils of excessive surgery, of fee-splitting and unprofessional practices generally; to the problem of hospitals and their support; to the inflammable subject of socialized medicine, of which he speaks quietly but with convincing good sense. As philosopher and historian he sees, as he points out in his concluding chapter, dark days ahead for us all, but he holds out hopes for a new civilization in which "Medicine may even prove to be the link that will join the old age to the new."

An entertaining book overflowing with humor and humane warmth.

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TRADE WINDS

A BITTER wind whipped the grey streets. As an early dusk fell with cold and sleet, some forty-odd men gathered in the warmth and light of the cheerful and hospitable parlors of the celebrated Murray Hill Hotel. For this was the night when the members of the Baker Street Irregulars met to hold their annual meeting and dinner and to present reports on their research into the Sacred Writings.

The preliminaries disposed of, and the guests having taken their places at the dinner table, the first toast was offered by Christopher Morley, and as tradition would have it, to "The Woman." Mr. Harvey Officer then contributed a poem written in the meter of Kipling's "Road to Mandalay." It was sung with vigor and gusto and with a sober realization that it held particular meaning at the moment when Britain and America are united in fighting a common enemy. Mr. Officer's verses are called "The Road to Baker Street." We print them in their entirety:

In a restaurant in Holborn, where
young Stamford ate his lunch,
He revealed to Doctor Watson news
that proved a lucky hunch,
For he "did immortal service," whence
his memory is bright,
Introducing to the Doctor whom we
honor here tonight.
On the road to Baker Street,
Where Lestrade and Gregson meet,
Where the art of crime detection
found its scientific feet,
On the road to Baker Street,
Where we sit at Sherlock's feet,
And we read again the Canon with
the stories all complete.

Now his eyes were sharp and piercing
and his nose was long and thin,
And his hands were stained with acids,
square and prominent his chin,
His tobacco in a slipper, in a scuttle
his cigars,
With a gasogene and tantalus not
found in modern bars.
We begin in Baker Street,
On a day of wind and sleet,
When the "tall, ascetic figure" once
again we gladly meet,
For "the game's afoot," he cries,
From his bed must Watson rise,
And they rattle in a hansom for adventurous emprise.

But when crime was on vacation and
the thugs were lying low,
In his armchair Sherlock fiddled, scraping chords with careless bow,
Chords sonorous, chords fantastic, how
he did it no one sees,
For you cannot play such music with
your fiddle on your knees.
Had we been in Baker Street,
Would those chords have sounded
sweet?
And would we with Doctor Watson
have been patient and discreet?
Ah, the years, how fast they fleet,
Since those days in Baker Street,
Let us hope that even Mendelssohn
from him would be a treat.

Ship me off to Piccadilly, to a London
Bobby's beat,
Where a hansom-cab would take me
to the shrine in Baker Street,
For the bells of London call me, and
it's there that I would be,
Sitting in with Doctor Watson on a
night-long story spree.
O ye sons of Baker Street,
As we sit at Sherlock's feet,
Be we sure the land that knew him
shall not ever know defeat,
For the men of England's fleet
Once again their foes will beat,
Nor shall Axis armies ever tread the
stones of Baker Street.

As the dinner progressed one of the guests rose to offer the utterly incredible theory that Mycroft Holmes, the erudite brother of the renowned Sherlock, was a gentleman of "oblique" inclinations with some of the leanings, but not the sharpness, of Professor James Moriarty. In contradiction of this charge evidence was advanced as follows: Draw a box with sixty-four squares. Begin at the top from left to right and place in the letters M Y C R O F T. Do the same in vertical form from top to bottom placing in the same letters M Y C R O F T. This leaves an empty space in the last box of the top line and the bottom left line. From thereon place the following letters in each empty square beginning with the top right and continue from left to right . . . H O L M E S S H E R L O C K H W H I T A K E R ' S A L M A N A C D R W E L E M E N T A Y V A L L E Y. The result should prove once and for all that Mycroft was never anything but an upright British citizen and in no way an "oblique" character like the Professor.

As the dinner neared its finish a second toast was offered to Mrs. Hudson, a Canonical toast to Gasogene, Mr. Edgar W. Smith, and one to the controversial Mycroft. Coffee and cigars were passed around and the serious business of the evening was at hand. Mr. Peter Gregg opened the proceedings with a paper on "Sherlock as an Epicure" which established the fact that Holmes was never an epicure but a *glutton*. Then followed the papers by Drs. Wolf, Hoffman, and medical examiner Martin continuing the highly sensational thesis advanced last year

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by Rex Stout that Watson was a woman.

The last contribution of the evening was made by Robert Leavitt, who with blue prints, photostats, and mathematical charts proved to the satisfaction of the members that Sherlock Holmes was an extremely poor marksman and that it was Dr. Watson who invariably plugged the thug on those occasions when shooting was necessary. This charge created a furor. But the composed Mr. Leavitt shouted all criticism down.

"Here," replied Mr. Leavitt, "are photostats of firearms that Mr. Holmes used during his career. These are the models that were in use in England during the days of the detective's greatest activities. Now in the cases of — — —," and Mr. Leavitt unrolled proof after proof and went into detail in support of his charges. In concluding Mr. Leavitt remarked with evident satisfaction, that in practically all the cases of Mr. Holmes in which a gun was necessary the detective, to make sure his aim would not miss, would place the weapon very close to the head of the culprit.

"This is evidence in itself that Mr. Holmes was quite unsure of his skill with firearms," gleefully remarked the speaker as he sat down.

LOUIS GREENFIELD.

ANSWERS TO LITERARY QUIZ

1. "Gunga Din," by Rudyard Kipling.
2. Jeeves, in "Jeeves" and many other stories by P. G. Wodehouse.
3. Mrs. Bardell, in "Pickwick Papers," by Dickens.
4. Morgiana, in "Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves," from the Arabian Nights.
5. Passepartout, in "Around the World in Eighty Days," by Jules Verne.
6. Gabriel Betteredge, in "The Moonstone," by Wilkie Collins.
7. Pomona, in "Rudder Grange," by Frank Stockton.
8. Ruggles, in "Ruggles of Red Gap," by Harry Leon Wilson.
9. Angela, in "The Eve of St. Agnes," by Keats.
10. Ruth, in "The Pirates of Penzance," by W. S. Gilbert.

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16 – O	17 – L		18 – D	19 – A		20 – W	21 – Q	22 – G	23 – L	24 – A		25 – X	26 – E	27 – H	28 – D	
29 – S		30 – X	31 – B	32 – G		33 – T	34 – R	35 – E	36 – B	37 – H		38 – U	39 – N	40 – P		41 – W
42 – Q	43 – H	44 – F	45 – E	46 – X		47 – D	48 – B		49 – W	50 – F	51 – D	52 – V		53 – L	54 – A	
55 – H	56 – M	57 – P	58 – G	59 – R		60 – V	61 – Q	62 – U	63 – B		64 – S	65 – O		66 – W	67 – B	68 – C
69 – J		70 – W	71 – Q	72 – I	73 – H	74 – E	75 – A	76 – D	77 – V		78 – O	79 – K		80 – D	81 – P	82 – J
83 – K	84 – M		85 – B	86 – M	87 – O	88 – X	89 – T		90 – V	91 – P	92 – B		93 – H	94 – V	95 – U	96 – J
97 – E	98 – S		99 – J	100 – N		101 – H	102 – D	103 – C	104 – F		105 – T	106 – G	107 – K		108 – W	109 – T
110 – I	111 – C	112 – R	113 – H	114 – M		115 – X	116 – C	117 – A	118 – M		119 – N	120 – R		121 – F	122 – Q	123 – E
124 – D	125 – M	126 – W		127 – B	128 – C	129 – V	130 – E		131 – O	132 – U		133 – T	134 – L	135 – A		136 – C
137 – U	138 – L	139 – S	140 – F		141 – I	142 – X	143 – N	144 – V	145 – C	146 – J		147 – P	148 – S	149 – J	150 – L	151 – U
	152 – C	153 – P	154 – M	155 – W	156 – A		157 – F	158 – G	159 – X	160 – D	161 – J		162 – W	163 – J	164 – I	165 – V
166 – S		167 – G		168 – K	169 – M	170 – C	171 – I	172 – H	173 – T		174 – U	175 – S	176 – X	177 – F	178 – B	

DIRECTIONS

To solve this puzzle you must guess twenty-four words, the definitions of which are given in the column headed DEFINITIONS. The letters in each word to be guessed are numbered. These numbers appear under the dashes in the column headed WORDS. There is a dash for each letter in the required word. The key letters in the squares are for convenience, indicating to which word in the definitions each letter in the diagram belongs. When you have guessed a word, fill it in on the dashes; then write each letter in the correspondingly numbered square on the puzzle diagram. When the squares are all filled in you will find (by reading from left to right) a quotation from a famous author. Reading up and down the letters mean nothing. The black squares indicate ends of words; therefore words do not necessarily end at the right side of the diagram.

When the column headed WORDS is filled in, the initial letters spell the name of the author and the title of the piece from which the quotation has been taken. Authority for spelling and definitions is Webster's New International Dictionary (1938 edition).

The solution of last week's *Double Crostic* will be found on page 9 of this issue.

DEFINITIONS

A. Persons or things of little importance (2 wds.)

B. That which is considered finished or beyond one's comprehension (2 wds.)

C. Lower House of Norwegian Storting.

D. Division of *bony* fishes.

E. Lord of Antioch in *Pericles.*

F. American impressionist figure and landscape painter (1862-).

G. Goddess of love, mirth and social joy (Egypt. relig.)

H. Insulting presumptuousness.

I. German composer (1833-97).

J. In heaps.

K. English antiquary *(Foedera)* (1641-1713).

L. Composer of the opera *Lakmé.*

M. Unalterably adhering to a custom, text or code.

N. Japanese syllabary or kana (the A. B. C.)

O. Crushed into particles (as the cacao bean).

P. End of a temple containing the sanctuary (arch.)

Q. Heedful.

R. Having a projection or curvature in or near the middle (Heraldry).

S. Indian of a tribe on Yakima reservation, Washington.

T. In a benign manner.

U. Friend to Caesar in *Antony and Cleopatra.*

V. Poorly expressed (comp.)

W. Elaborate adornment.

X. Recently married.

WORDS

156 1 117 75 135 19 24 54

85 178 67 9 31 63 127 48 92 36

128 145 116 103 152 136 111 68 170

47 80 51 102 18 28 124 76 160

123 97 26 74 45 35 15 130

157 44 140 121 50 104 177

158 167 32 22 106 58

55 93 101 6 73 113 172 37 43 27

110 72 14 171 164 141

163 96 69 149 161 99 146 82

107 79 168 159 83

12 23 134 150 53 138 17

114 118 154 56 169 4 86 125 84

119 100 143 39 10

65 87 78 131 7 16

153 91 40 81 57 147

122 5 21 61 71 42

120 112 34 59

98 29 175 139 11 64 166 148

33 89 105 133 13 109 173

38 137 132 151 62 95 174

2 52 129 90 94 144 60 165 77

20 155 162 108 49 70 3 126 66 41

46 176 115 8 30 142 88 25

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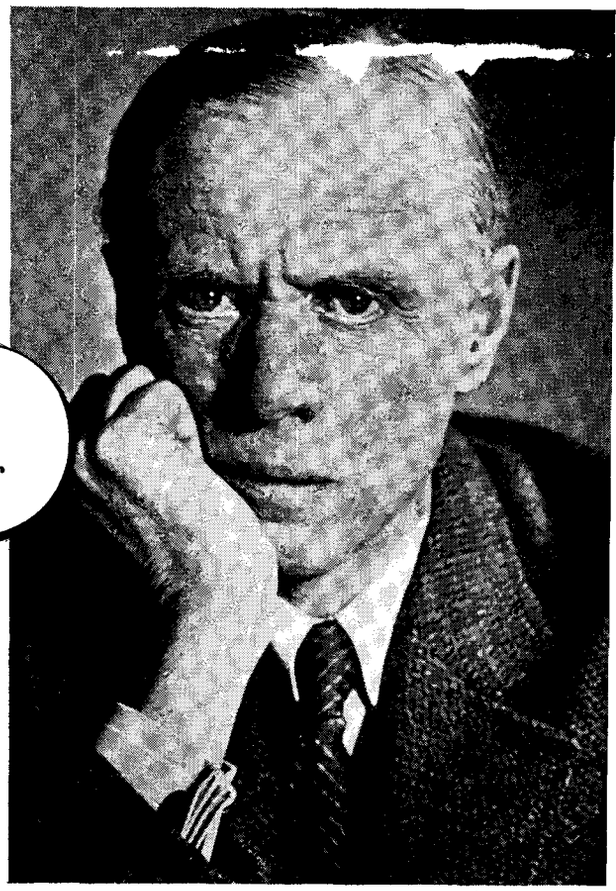
MR. SINCLAIR LEWIS,
the dean of American novelists



The author of "Elmer Gantry" writes about the Reverend Henry Ward Beecher

WHEN THE Reverend Henry Ward Beecher was sued on a charge of adultery with the wife of his friend Theodore Tilton, the America of 1871 was ecstatically shocked.

For Mr. Beecher was, till his death in 1887, the archbishop of American liberal Protestantism. He came out for the right side of every question—always a little too late. John Brown's rifles were called "Beecher Bibles," and from the pulpit Beecher sold female slaves, to gain their freedom. He was referred to as "the greatest preacher since St. Paul," he was mentioned for the presidency, he was a powerful writer of trash; and, all over the land, families got out the carry-all to drive into town and hear him lecture on everything from "The Strange Woman" to the cozy theory that a worker who didn't rejoice in bringing up five children on a wage of a dollar a day was a drunken gunnysack.

Plymouth Church, in Brooklyn, paid him $20,000 a year, and in his pocket he liked to carry uncut gems. He would have been an intimate friend of Lincoln except for the detail that Lincoln despised him. He confided to many visitors that he was always glad to pray with Lincoln and to give him advice whenever the president sneaked over to Brooklyn in the dark, and the only flaw is that nobody except Beecher ever saw him sneak . . .

HE WAS A combination of St. Augustine, Barnum, and John Barrymore. He differed from the Reverend Elmer Gantry chiefly in having once, pretty well along in young manhood, read a book, and in being a Beecher, which was a special state of grace. His father, Lyman Beecher of Litchfield and Cincinnati, was a powerful hellfire preacher and progenitor, and his sister was Harriet Beecher Stowe, whose *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was the first evidence to America that no hurricane can be so disastrous to a country as a ruthlessly humanitarian woman. At the sunlit height of Beecher's career came Tilton's suit for alienation of affection, and in Brooklyn and Litchfield they are still arguing about it. But its effect upon the Protestant church, which might otherwise have taken over the whole government, is only beginning to be seen.

THE LATE Paxton Hibben's story of Beecher, HENRY WARD BEECHER: AN AMERICAN PORTRAIT, was published in 1927. It had great praise, but it also met with a hush-hush campaign on the part of certain pious writers and editors and librarians that amounted to violent suppression. The Editorial Committee of The Readers Club believes that it is reviving a book which is more stimulating now than when it was first published.

Nothing could finally suppress and silence so courageous and intelligent a man as Paxton Hibben, not even his death, in 1928, when he was forty-eight years old. He had been a member of the American diplomatic corps in Europe and Latin America, well trained in the severe correctitudes of that caste, and he was a foreign correspondent of standing; yet he had taken the risk of vastly displeasing his superiors by his reports on Greece and the new Russia.

When he turned to biography, in this book, the exactness of his scholarship would suggest that he had all his life never strayed farther from a library than to the University Co-op, though actually it was his foreign training which enabled him to see the contrasts which make this portrait so human.

Beecher is here entire, from his boyhood: blundering, lonely, almost abnormal in the longing for friendly sympathy; through his frantic and fairly phony days as an ambitious young preacher on the Indiana frontier in 1837; up to his antimacassar splendor as a metropolitan pastor filled with pomposity and metaphors and the best oyster stew. He slapped the backs of all the men, he tickled the ribs of almost all the current ideas, and he kissed a surprising proportion of the women.

THE subtitle of the book is *An American Portrait,* and indeed here is the portrait of that blowsy hoyden of an America that existed when Grant was accounted a statesman and Longfellow an epic poet. Although Hibben never wanders from his scrupulous portraiture to give highfalutin panshots of the whole country, yet in understanding Beecher we understand everything that was boisterously immature in American religion, American literature, American manners, and the American relationship, ardent but sneaking, between men and women. We understand all the spirited spinsters who wanted to paint water-lilies on the backs of the herded buffaloes. We understand what we are still living down. Here is the story of our own grandfathers, which is one-quarter of our own stories. Though we speak with the brisk quack of the radio, our words are still too often the lordly lard of Henry Ward Beecher.

In discovering his emptiness, the country discovered its own emptiness and, as Captain Hibben says, "When the social history of the last quarter of the nineteenth century comes to be written, the Beecher case may be found to have had more to do with clearing the intellectual ground and freeing the minds of men from the clutter of the past than any other one episode."

Hibben does not spare his patient. The horsehair hypocrisies of Beecher are set down like fever symptoms on a chart. He does not flinch from the charming melodrama of Beecher's association with the wives of all the backers of his one-man show. Yet the book is never lip-licking and never a tirade. You see that, given the glacial hellfire of old Lyman Beecher, his son Henry would have to be a hypocrite, exactly in ratio to his own energy and imagination and desire for affection.

When it was published, this book was a little ahead of its time. The Editorial Committee believes that now it is just at its time.

SINCLAIR LEWIS

Do you want this book?

IF YOU would like to have a copy of this book, Mr. Sinclair Lewis has completed an arrangement by which you can obtain it for only one dollar.

Mr. Lewis is one of four members of the Editorial Committee of The Readers Club. The others are:

CLIFTON FADIMAN
CARL VAN DOREN
ALEX. WOOLLCOTT

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